



The Leader In Recreational Aviation

Chapter 736 Newsletter for September 2014

FAA Will Miss Part 23 Deadline — By Two Years

The FAA will badly miss a deadline to overhaul decades-old light aircraft certification rules, a top agency official told lawmakers. News of the delay drew condemnation from members of Congress and aviation leaders, who say the agency is shirking its obligations, and raised fresh doubts about the ability of manufacturers to keep pace with rapidly changing technology.

Congress and President Obama gave the FAA a deadline of December 2015 to complete the hotly anticipated **Part 23 rewrite**, but FAA Associate Administrator for Aviation Safety Peggy Gilligan said during a House aviation subcommittee hearing that overhauling the regulations will take far longer than originally anticipated — two full years longer, in fact.

"As we do this, we want to be sure we're improving the certification process and not losing any of the safety requirements that we have in place," she said in response to a pointed question from Minnesota Congressman Rick Nolan.

"The schedule is somewhat slower than what the legislation had envisioned," she told subcommittee members. "The final rule is right now planned for December 2017. That is later than the statute that called for a final rule by December 2015, but again, first the complexity of writing the rule and then getting it published for notice and comment ... will take a considerably longer time than was anticipated in the statute."

The delay means light airplane makers will need to slow development of new designs they hoped to introduce to the market soon, such as the carbon-composite **C4 from Flight Design**, which was due to begin flight testing soon.

The postponement of new light aircraft certification rules will also put severe cost pressure on manufacturers with next generation airplanes on the drawing board. General Aviation Manufacturers Association president Pete Bunce blasted the FAA for the delay, saying the agency is ignoring a clear mandate from Congress and the White House.

"We've been working on this initiative since back in 2007," Bunce said. "The bureaucracy is saying we don't care what you in Congress say, we don't care what the president says, we're going to get it done when we want to get it done and it's going to be two years late. And that's exactly what we have to put up with in the industry."

FAA selects four unleaded fuels for testing

The FAA has selected four unleaded aviation fuels to undergo initial testing at the agency's William J. Hughes Technical Center. Two fuels developed by Swift Fuels and one fuel each developed by Shell and TOTAL will undergo laboratory and rig testing beginning this fall and concluding in fall 2015.

The fuels were submitted for consideration through the Piston Aviation Fuels Initiative (PAFI), a joint industry-government effort to facilitate the development and deployment of a new unleaded avgas that will meet the needs of the existing piston-engine aircraft fleet. In addition to AOPA and the FAA, the PAFI steering group includes the American Petroleum Institute, the Experimental Aircraft Association, the General Aviation Manufacturers Association, the National Air Transportation Association, and the National Business Aviation Association.

Before choosing fuels for testing, the FAA evaluated all proposals submitted through PAFI in terms of impact on the existing fleet, production and distribution infrastructure, environment, toxicological effects, and anticipated cost of aircraft operations.

The results of the initial testing phase will determine how many fuels continue to full scale testing in engines and aircraft. That second phase of testing, which the FAA expects to complete in 2018, will produce standardized data for the properties, performance, and certification of one or more fuels.

The testing program has earned support in Congress, which provided \$6 million to fund PAFI in the 2014 fiscal year. Both the U.S. House and Senate Appropriations committees have proposed providing another \$6 million for the program in fiscal year 2015.

There are approximately 167,000 aircraft in the United States and a total of 230,000 worldwide that primarily rely on the currently available 100 low-lead avgas for safe operation. It is the only remaining transportation fuel in the United States that contains added tetraethyl lead (TEL) needed to create the very high octane levels required by high-performance aircraft engines. Operations with inadequate octane can result in engine failures.

Senators urge quick action on medical reform

Eleven senators, all co-sponsors of a bill to reform the third class medical process, are asking the Department of Transportation and the Office of Management and Budget to take quick action on their review of the FAA's proposed medical reform rule.

In the [Sept. 2 letter](#) to Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx and OMB Director Shaun Donovan, the senators warned that "this is a time-sensitive issue" and asked that both

agencies complete their review within one month. Once the reviews are complete, the FAA can open its notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) for public comment. The NPRM would expand the medical standard now used by sport pilots to thousands more pilots who could fly recreationally without needing to go through the costly and outdated third class medical certification process.

The letter is the latest in a series sent by legislative and industry leaders urging the Department of Transportation and Office of Management and Budget to move quickly through the review process. Previously, the original co-sponsors of the General Aviation Pilot Protection Act, 32 members of the House GA Caucus, Senate GA Caucus Co-chair Mark Begich (D-Alaska), and a coalition of seven general aviation industry groups led by AOPA all sent similar letters.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on **Monday, Sept. 15th** at the Weathervane Restaurant in Waterville. As is our usual practice (just in case you've forgotten), please arrive by 6:00 pm if you plan to have dinner so that the meeting can begin at its normal time of 7:30 pm.