



Chapter 736 Newsletter for January 2015

Monthly Meetings

With many members down south for the winter, winter vacations and otherwise not in the area during foul weather season, it has been decided to forego our monthly meetings until the snowbirds come back to roost and the weather improves. We will, therefore, not hold any meetings until April of 2015.

See you all in the Spring.

AOPA pushes DOT to end medical reform delay

It has been nearly seven months since the Department of Transportation (DOT) began a planned 90-day review of the FAA's proposed medical reform rule, and AOPA members and the general aviation community are frustrated by the department's inaction, AOPA President Mark Baker told Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx in a **strongly worded letter sent Jan. 13**.

“Proposed medical reforms, which simply seek to expand on a standard used successfully for a decade, have been under review for three years, making it incomprehensible to many in the aviation community that no action has yet been taken,” Baker wrote.

The standard, which allows some pilots to fly recreationally without obtaining a third class medical certificate, has been in use since 2004 when the FAA adopted the sport pilot rule.

“The evidence is clear: Allowing pilots to fly without going through the third-class medical process is safe,” Baker wrote. “The FAA's proposed rule would simply extend this standard to more pilots flying more types of small aircraft.”

The proposed medical reforms have the support of more than 180 bipartisan members of Congress, who co-sponsored legislation known as the General Aviation Pilot Protection Act that would have allowed thousands more pilots to fly without obtaining a medical certificate. Major aviation organizations and type clubs also have publicly expressed support for reforms as have the Flying Physicians Association and the AOPA Medical Advisory Board, whose members are both doctors and pilots.

Allowing reform to move forward also will save time and money for pilots and the federal government while bolstering general aviation—an industry that contributes \$150

billion to the economy and supports more than \$1.2 million jobs but is struggling, in part because of the high cost of flying.

AOPA estimates that medical reform, as proposed under the General Aviation Pilot Protection Act, would save pilots \$24.6 million every year. A conservative estimate also shows an annual savings of \$1.9 million to the FAA.

Because third class medical exams take place only once every two or five years depending on age, they are no substitute for an honest relationship with a primary care doctor and the self-assessment that pilots must conduct before every flight. To help pilots accurately assess their fitness to fly, AOPA is developing a comprehensive online educational course, which will be offered free to the public.

Baker also noted that even without a medical certification requirement pilots must undergo an evaluation with a flight instructor at least every two years to act as pilot in command. During these flight reviews, instructors evaluate the pilot's cognitive condition, as well as his or her physical ability to safely operate an aircraft. If either is in question they do not endorse the pilot.

"Our members, the general aviation industry, members of Congress, and the American people are frustrated with our government's inability to move efficiently and effectively on issues that will improve safety, save money, and help create jobs and support local economies," Baker wrote. "On behalf of our members and the aviation community we must ask, when will the Department of Transportation allow third-class medical reform to move forward? The time to take action is now."

Maine Aviation Forum

Save the Date

What: Maine Aviation Forum

Where: Owl's Head Transportation Museum

When: Saturday February 21st

Registration: 09:30

Forum Starts: 10:00

Loss of Control Tops NTSB Most Wanted Safety List

The National Transportation Safety Board today released its 2015 list of "Most Wanted" transportation safety improvements, and at the top of the list cited loss of control in general aviation as among the most pressing dangers demanding urgent attention.

"While airline accidents have become relatively rare in the U.S., pilots and passengers involved in general aviation operations still die at alarming rates every year due to loss of aircraft control by the pilot," the NTSB said.

Between 2001 and 2011, more than 40 percent of fixed-wing GA fatal accidents occurred because of loss of control, the Safety Board said. The NTSB blamed the trend on pilot

proficiency standards that are less rigorous than those of airline pilots. The Board pointed to long intervals between flying for many GA pilots, a poor understanding of aerodynamic stalls/spins and the requirement for GA pilots to complete a flight review once every 24 months compared with more frequent training for professional pilots.

What can be done to reduce the risk of loss of control for GA pilots? Installing safety gear such as an angle-of-attack indicator is a good first step, the Board said. Such equipment is more affordable thanks to FAA rules that eliminate the need for costly certifications.

Because stalls at low altitude and stall/spins account for the majority of loss of control fatalities, the NTSB also recommends that GA pilots:

- - Be prepared to recognize the warning signs of an impending stall, and be able to apply appropriate recovery techniques before stall onset.
- - Be honest with themselves about their knowledge level of stalls, and their ability to recognize and handle them.
- - Utilize aeronautical decision making techniques and flight risk assessment tools during both preflight planning and inflight operations.
- - Manage distractions so that they do not interfere with situational awareness.
- - Understand, properly train, and maintain currency in the equipment and airplanes they operate. They should take advantage of available commercial trainer, type club and transition training opportunities.

Cold Weather Checklist

If you're flying in a part of the country where the TV weather personality uses terms like "wind chill," "arctic blast" and "polar vortex" you'll want to modify your winter checklist with a few common-sense items. Warm clothing is a must — you ought to be able to easily walk to safety in the event of a forced landing. Likewise for ice, snow and frost removal from your airplane — and that goes double for ice on control surfaces and in important nooks like the static port and pitot tube.

You might be tempted on a frigid day to speed through your preflight. Just make sure you don't skip anything important. Look for fuel dye as an indication of fuel leaks, and try to keep the tanks full to keep out moisture. Ice in fuel, by the way, looks like floating dust.

Also remember, a cold battery will be weaker unless fully charged. Cold oil will be thicker. Once you get the engine started, let the oil warm until it thins and pressure is normal (check your POH for proper procedures).

You'll also want to confirm before departing that nothing important is frozen — such as the fuel selector knob, which has happened to a few misfortunate pilots. Remember too that gyros need to warm up to get up to speed.

A CO detector is an important safety device for winter operations, when you'll be using cabin heat.

It's also a good idea to adjust your weather margins in winter, when weather systems move more quickly and turbulence, icing and other hazardous conditions can appear without warning. Try to fly into improving weather, and never trust the forecast, especially for icing. Always be aware of the location of better weather conditions. Remember, when temperatures dip, an easily survivable situation can quickly escalate into a life-threatening emergency.