



The Leader In Recreational Aviation

Chapter 736 Newsletter for June 2016

Next Meeting - Please Note Special Date

Our next meeting will be held at Curtis Air at Pittsfield Municipal airport (2B7) on **Monday, June 13th at 6:00 pm**. This meeting is scheduled a week earlier than normal to give us enough wiggle room to discuss issues associated with the upcoming fly-in. There will be food.

Please make every effort to attend.

FAA works to streamline medical certification

The aerospace medicine community is made up of lots of specialty groups that meet throughout the year and around the world. There's the "mother group," the Aerospace Medical Association (AsMA), that convened in April in Atlantic City. The meeting included the Society of United States Air Force Flight Surgeons, Aerospace Human Factors Association, Airlines Medical Directors Association, the International Association of Military Flight Surgeon Pilots, Society of NASA Flight Surgeons, Space Medicine Association, the International Academy of Aviation and Space Medicine, the Civil Aviation Medical Association, to name several, but the list goes on!

AMEs are physicians designated by the FAA to conduct airman medical examinations and issue medical certificates. As part of their continuing medical education, they are required to attend refresher training to stay sharp on the FAA certification policies and practices.

There is a lot of change going on in the FAA with respect to medical certification. Aside from the current legislation regarding third class medical reform, the FAA is working internally to improve the efficiency of a very complex bureaucratic certification process. If you have a special issuance or have ever had your medical application deferred for review by the FAA, you are most likely aware that it can take quite a while to obtain your certificate.

The FAA undertook the CACI (Conditions AMEs Can Issue) program several years ago to move some medical conditions from the "special issuance" category to an office issuance by the AME. There are currently 16 conditions that qualify for a CACI, and it is

reasonable to conclude that there will be more coming down the road as the FAA continues to “decentralize” the certification process and allow AMEs more latitude to make certification decisions.

Another administrative change that is evolving now is the use of checklists for certain conditions that will make it easier for your treating doctor and the AME to determine that an airman with a medical condition can be reissued a medical certificate more quickly by providing the treating doctor with a specific set of guidelines to determine that the pilot is eligible for issuance.

In the mid-1990s, AOPA was actively involved in the efforts to allow insulin-treated diabetics to qualify for special issuance. That change in 1996 allowed certification for third class certification only, and that policy restriction is still in effect today. At any given time there are about 300 insulin-treated pilots safely operating under special issuance. In fact, I met three of them recently at Sun 'n Fun in Lakeland, Florida, and they are all doing great and actively flying.

In recent years, several countries have allowed certification for commercial pilots under a limitation called “with or as a co-pilot.” The FAA is currently evaluating a protocol that might well result in a change in policy that allows applicants for first and second class privileges to fly under a special issuance. The monitoring technology available today for diabetics is quite good; especially with continuous glucose monitoring that provides consistent readings of blood sugar. Coupled with a motivated patient who really wants to fly professionally and pays close attention to managing their diabetes, the consensus is that a reasonable and satisfactory regulatory protocol can be created to safely allow commercial operations for a subset of insulin-treated pilots.

There are still plenty of things that need fixing in the aeromedical certification process, but the effort to improve the timeliness of certification review is a priority for the FAA.

CONGRESS MOVES CLOSER TO FAA FUNDING

The full Senate passed the 2017 Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) Appropriations Act in an 89-to-8 vote on May 19. The Senate bill includes \$16.4 billion in funding for the FAA for 2017, up slightly from the \$16.28 billion enacted for 2016. That number includes funding for air traffic control, \$1 billion for NextGen, \$159 million for contract towers, and \$7 million for ongoing research into an unleaded replacement for avgas.

The Senate vote came one day after the House THUD Subcommittee approved its own funding bill. The House bill would provide \$16.3 billion to the FAA, a \$69 million increase over 2016 spending and just slightly less than the Senate measure. The House bill also would fund air traffic control, NextGen, and contract towers at approximately the same levels as the Senate bill.

The House bill is slated to go to the House Appropriations Committee for markup and then to the full House for a vote, which will likely happen in June. If the full House passes its bill, which differs from the Senate-passed version, the two chambers will have

to reconcile their differences before the legislation can go to the president for his signature.

While the THUD appropriation bills in the House and Senate would provide funding for the FAA, they are separate from FAA reauthorization legislation that is also pending in Congress. Reauthorization legislation “authorizes” the expenditure of money from the federal budget and may create programs, identify agency priorities, and even specify how much money should be spent on specific programs. But reauthorization legislation does not actually provide the money from the federal budget to pay for these programs. Appropriations bills, like the THUD bills, allocate funding for federal programs such as the FAA.

In April, the full Senate passed FAA reauthorization legislation that includes third class medical reform and which would keep the FAA operating through the 2017 fiscal year. The House has introduced its own reauthorization legislation, which also includes medical reforms, but that bill has been mired in controversy over proposals to privatize air traffic control. It is not clear when the full House might take up FAA reauthorization.

Are You Ready for the Airman Certification Standards (ACS)?

On June 15, the FAA will replace the Practical Test Standards (PTS) for the private pilot airplane certificate and the instrument-airplane rating with the corresponding Airman Certification Standards (ACS). If you are an applicant, an instructor, or evaluator, please take the time to learn what it is, why they are making this change, and how the ACS affects training, teaching, or testing for the private pilot airplane certificate and the instrument-airplane rating. The “go-to” page for definitive ACS information, including final versions of these documents, is: www.faa.gov/training_testing/testing/acs/. If you have a question not answered in the FAQs, email the FAA’s ACS Focus Team at 9-AVS-ACS-Focus-Team@faa.gov.