



The Leader In Recreational Aviation

Chapter 736 Newsletter for May 2017

Next Meeting

We're starting meetings again this month

Our next meeting will be held at Curtis Air at the Pittsfield Municipal Airport on **Tuesday, May 16th beginning at 6:00 pm**. Everyone bring a few bucks and we'll order some take out to kick things off.

FAA Tasks Panel with Regulatory Review

Carrying out a mandate of a [presidential executive order](#), the U.S. FAA has tasked an industry panel with reviewing recommendations that are candidates to repeal and replace. The Aviation Rulemaking Advisory Committee (ARAC) will also review items on the FAA regulatory agenda.

President Donald Trump signed an order on February 24, “Enforcing the Regulatory Reform Agenda,” calling on agencies to establish regulatory reform task forces (RRTFs) to evaluate existing regulations for potential repeal or modification. The RRTFs were directed to identify regulations that eliminate jobs or inhibit job creation; are outdated, unnecessary or ineffective; impose costs that exceed benefits; and create a serious inconsistency or otherwise interfere with regulatory reform initiatives and policies, among other criteria.

That order also followed the earlier so-called “two for one” order, “Reducing Regulation and Controlling Regulatory Costs,” which called on agencies to identify at least two existing regulations for repeal for each new regulation added.

“As part of this process, the department is directed to seek input/assistance from entities significantly affected by its regulation,” the FAA said, adding [it assigned the review to an ARAC](#) since the committee’s “membership represents a broad spectrum of entities significantly affected by the FAA’s regulations.”

In addition to the list and supporting reasons for the recommendation, the FAA asked that documentation include both majority and dissenting positions on the findings and the rationale for each position. The agency asked for the initial report to be submitted to the FAA by June 1 with follow up report, including detailed documentation, by the end of August.

BasicMed Has Real Advantages

As far pilots' rights are concerned, BasicMed is not as good a process as the Sport Pilot "driver's license" medical, which puts the power in the hands of the pilot to decide his or her medical fitness to fly.

Still, BasicMed has some huge advantages over both Sport Pilot and regular Third Class medical certification.

Flying under BasicMed is better than using the Sport Pilot driver's license route for a few big reasons: You can fly bigger, faster and more complex planes and with more passengers, too under BasicMed. Under Sport Pilot, you're limited to an LSA conforming plane and a single passenger, making it truly a sport flying alternative. With BasicMed you can fly very high performance planes (up to 250 kts), with up to six occupants and up to 18,000 feet, among other fairly liberal allowances.

While BasicMed does limit pilots from flying above 18,000 feet and faster than 250 knots (the two are closely linked for most planes), that still leaves open a wide array of very sophisticated single and twin-engine planes. BasicMed essentially keeps Daher TBM pilots from flying (the plane does its thing best above 20,000 feet, not below, but the allowances still leave open planes like the Beech Baron, the Piper M350 (Mirage) and just about everything below.

You can't fly for hire under BasicMed, which makes sense because flying for hire typically requires a Second Class medical certificate, whereas BasicMed's mandate is to offer an alternative to Third Class certification.

The advantages to BasicMed over the Third-Class medical are related to physical limitations more than operational ones. Pilots flying under BasicMed can have and be managing a wide range of health concerns that would typically be disqualifying under conventional Third-Class medical certification. These conditions include everything from heart issues to mental health challenges. Many pilots have complained that the disqualifying threshold for the Third-Class medical is far too strict, and we agree. For a lot of pilots, BasicMed solves that problem. True, there are requirements for having passed your most recent FAA physical, and to have passed one within the past 10 years, but this limitation will affect relatively few pilots.

BasicMed is not everything we might have wanted it to be. But what it does provide—the ability for pilots with safely managed medical and mental health conditions that might have been disqualifying under the Third-Class rules to keep flying—will make BasicMed worth the wait for a lot of pilots, and that's one improvement we roundly applaud.

FAA BEGINS DRONE MAP RELEASE

The FAA began to publish electronic maps for airports across the country that detail where and at what altitudes remote pilots may hope to achieve clearance to fly unmanned aircraft in certain types of controlled airspace. This information will be useful to all sorts of pilots.

The maps lay foundation for the Low Altitude Authorization and Notification Capability (LAANC), a system for drone traffic control that the FAA hopes to have online by the end of 2017. Remote pilots are expected to benefit from more rapid access to airspace where currently the time required to gain authorization makes many operations near airports impractical, while manned pilots also will have more information available to them about where routine unmanned aircraft system (UAS) operations are expected to occur.

Part 107, which governs unmanned aircraft, restricts operations in Class B, C, D, and E surface area airspace, though the FAA has authorized many [unmanned operations in controlled airspace](#) on a case-by-case basis since the regulation for small UAS took effect in August. A rapidly growing number of remote pilots who wish to operate within controlled airspace have [submitted requests through the FAA online system](#), though with little guidance or insight on how the FAA evaluates each airspace authorization request.

The agency expects a huge surge in drone activity, particularly commercial operations conducted under Part 107, in the coming 20 years, and is working to automate the UAS airspace authorization procedure as much as possible. More efficiency will allow the agency to scale up and meet growing demand for airspace authorizations; agency staff currently need three to four weeks to process an authorization request, and LAANC could bring that down to minutes in some cases.

The digital maps being made public through the [FAA UAS Data Delivery System](#) include a grid overlay that depicts acceptable altitude limits for UAS operations near airports around the country. Remote pilots can reference this information when planning flights and preparing to submit online authorization requests, with the expectation being that a request designed to conform with the local limits will be more likely to achieve rapid approval. Operations outside of the defined limits may still be approved, but will require more detailed review.

Manned pilots also can glean useful information studying the UAS facility maps for airports they use, as the maps will show where UAS operations may be more likely. Hobbyist drone pilots can use the UAS facility maps as a resource to identify what acceptable altitudes are around airports more generally, including airports with no control tower.

The area around each airport is divided into a grid with an associated altitude limit, such as “400” for a grid square where there is no local altitude restriction (Part 107 operations are generally limited to 400 feet agl, except in close proximity to a structure, or as authorized by a waiver) or “200” for a grid where UAS operations may be possible at or below 200 feet. Grids marked with a “0” are deemed too close to manned operations to allow any UAS operations.

The grids will be updated on the same 56-day cycle that applies to other aviation charts. The FAA plans to have all facility maps published by Oct. 31