



Chapter 736 Newsletter for October 2020

FAA FINALIZES CESSNA DOORPOST INSPECTION AD

An **airworthiness directive** that requires repetitive inspection of an estimated 14,653 single-engine Cessna airplanes for cracking of the strut attach fittings at the forward cabin doorposts will take effect November 12.

The FAA proposed the AD in 2018 to address possible “failure of the wing in operation” after an operator’s report led to the discovery of numerous cracks on **Cessna 207 airplanes**. The other Cessna aircraft models included in the AD’s affected list have design components shared with the Cessna 207, the FAA said.

The FAA **modified** some provisions of the AD in June 2020 and accepted additional public comments until mid-July.

The inspection and reporting costs have been estimated at \$212.50 per aircraft, with the cost of any needed repairs contingent on the inspection results, and the repairs to be conducted based on the applicable service kits, the AD said.

ALL-ELECTRIC AIRCRAFT RACING LEAGUE ANNOUNCED

COMPETITION BEGINS IN 2021

Beringer Aero, whose founders earned their racing chops during motorcycle sidecar competition, is partnering with **Air Race E** to establish an all-electric aircraft racing league in 2021 with at least 12 teams representing nine countries.

The Air Race E website describes pilots flying in fields of eight slender electric-powered aircraft racing wingtip-to-wingtip at 280 mph at “just 10m [33 feet] above the ground” through a 1.5-kilometer (about a mile) **oval circuit**. The international competition includes near-continuous left-hand turns for the pilots with a spectator viewing grandstand area adjacent to the start/finish line. The competition course layout is similar to the constant left turns at a NASCAR track, and organizers predicted it would bring racing that is “faster than any land-based motorsport.”

The combination of a prototype airplane, a dedicated test center, a compact racecourse, and pilots who are “raring to go” could spell keen competition when the effort gets off the ground. The competition is expected to be guided by Air Race Events and air racing

promoter Jeff Zaltman, who has previous experience directing Air Race 1 World Cup competition.

The all-electric racing league built steam in 2019 when a partnership with Airbus was announced even while the **Red Bull Air Race Series** was foundering. The connection with Airbus—an aircraft manufacturing company that is pursuing electric power for commercial airliners—will provide what the company calls a cutting-edge test bed for aircraft and electric motor designs, a news release pointed out.

Beringer aviation braking technology was honed from Formula 1 open-wheel race cars hurtling down automotive racetracks at speeds exceeding 230 mph (about 200 knots).

Teams from the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Norway, Ukraine, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom are already on board, “although the series remains open for other teams with the necessary qualifications,” a joint news release noted.

Air Race E predicted the “rigors of a competitive race environment” with a “demand for speed, performance and power management” would provide the “perfect platform for the development and promotion of cleaner, faster, and more technologically-advanced electric engines.”

NBAA To Hold Virtual Convention

The National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) announced on Monday that it will host an online business aviation trade show on Dec. 2-3. The Virtual Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition (VBACE) will feature 3D exhibit booths, keynote speakers, product demonstrations and education sessions. According to NBAA, exhibitors and attendees will be able to exchange information in real time during the event.

“This first-of-its-kind online convention will propel the event into the digital space, offering new and exciting opportunities,” said Chris Strong, NBAA senior vice president of conventions and membership. “With this event, we’re doing more than moving online: we’re moving ahead.”

VBACE is part of the organization’s NBAA GO virtual conference network. Attendee registration is expected to be available by Oct. 23 with further information about education sessions, keynote speakers and press conferences to be published over the next several weeks. As [previously reported by AVweb](#), NBAA canceled its 2020 Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition (NBAA-BACE), which was scheduled to take place Oct. 6-8 in Orlando, Florida, due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

PANDEMIC RELIEF SCALED BACK IN LATEST SFAR AMENDMENT

The FAA has revised the special federal aviation regulation that has governed training and testing requirements during the coronavirus pandemic, extending by two months the validity of medical certificates and knowledge tests that were to expire between October

2020 and January 2021 and adding two months to flight review deadlines that would have passed during that period.

The **new SFAR amendment** that took effect October 1 and was published in the *Federal Register* on October 6 reflects the agency's conclusion that "aviation activity continues to increase, and the industry is beginning to address the backlog of required training, checking and testing requirements. However, many of the **challenges** that existed when the FAA first issued the SFAR in April remain today as the public health emergency continues," the FAA said on its **website**.

The SFAR amendment eliminates the expanded instrument currency "lookback" period previously allowed for pilots who met certain operational requirements, and no new relief was provided for flight instructors with certificates nearing expiration.

"Although we sought continued relief for instrument currency and flight instructor certificates, we appreciate the FAA's continued extensions of validity for medical certificates and knowledge tests. The FAA's recognition of the importance of general aviation during COVID-19 restrictions and the increased infection rates across the country has allowed aircraft owners and operators the flexibility to continue to fly safely," said Christopher Cooper, AOPA senior director of regulatory affairs. To help pilots track their compliance responsibilities during the pandemic, the FAA provided a table comparing their status under the original SFAR, amendment SFAR 118-1, and the latest amendment SFAR 118-2. AOPA encourages pilots to review it carefully before conducting flight operations.

According to the table, SFAR 118-2 grants pilots with **flight reviews** coming due between October 2020 and January 2021 a two-month grace period to complete their flight reviews, subject to **eligibility and operational criteria**. (For example, a pilot whose flight review ordinarily would be due in October 2020 would have until December 31, 2020, to complete it.) Note that the two-month grace period differs from the three-month grace periods the original SFAR and SFAR 118-1 had afforded earlier in the year. SFAR 118-2 requires **instrument pilots** to follow the customary instrument experience requirements of FAR 61.57(c) to determine whether they may act as pilot in command under IFR or weather conditions less than the minimums prescribed for VFR. Previously, SFAR provisions allowed a nine-month "lookback" period, instead of six months, for determining their status.

The validity of **medical certificates** expiring between October 2020 and January 2021 is extended by two calendar months. Note that this provision is a shorter extension of validity than was available under previous SFAR provisions amending FAR 61.23. However, a three-month validity extension is provided for the medical certificates of pilots who reside in or serve as a pilot of an aircraft in Alaska.

The validity of **knowledge tests** that would ordinarily expire between October 2020 and January 2021 has been extended by two calendar months.

Mechanic applicants whose testing period is set to expire in the October 2020 through January 2021 period will have a two-calendar-month extension.

In extending portions of the SFAR, the FAA said that although aviation activity was on the upswing, "many of the challenges that existed when the FAA first issued SFAR 118 remain today," and that "airmen continue to have trouble complying with certain training, recency, checking, testing, duration, and renewal requirements."

It acknowledged that the “training ecosystem” remained under strain.

“In addition, the FAA workforce and its designees have not fully returned to normal activity. As a result, airman qualifications could lapse because persons cannot access training or testing facilities or schedule events in a timely fashion or because FAA inspectors or designees are unavailable to conduct required tests, checks, or observations,” it said.