

The Soaring Society of America, Inc.
Government Liaison Committee
Stephen Northcraft, Chairman

Board of Director's Report
February 19th, Greenville, SC

Overview

I want to remind the Directors that it is a matter of Federal Policy that Government employees actively involved in ongoing rulemaking cannot discuss the potential rule with the public once the process is initiated. What this means to the SSA is that once an NPRM (or ANPRM) is published and the comment period closed, the employees of the agency involved are prohibited from discussing the proposed rule with us. This directly impacts the SSA regarding 3rd Class Medicals for towpilots and the ADS-B/Transponder ANPRM.

Committee Structure

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| Committee Chair | Stephen Northcraft |
| Airspace | Cindy Brickner, Hal Becker on transponders |
| Pilot Certification | Rich Carlson (SSF Trustee) |
| Airport Utilization | Stephen Northcraft |
| Aircraft Certification | S. Northcraft (acting) |
| RTCA and Special Issues | Bernald Smith |
| GPS/DAFFI | Rick Sheppe |
| FAA Rule-making Advisory Comm. | Tim Anderson |
| Surveillance | Gerry Molidor |

ANPRM 2015-2147 update

For the reason noted above the SSA has not been able to discuss this subject with the FAA employees reviewing the comments and making recommendations. We have been informed that typically it takes 18-24 months from the close of the comment period for an ANPRM for the reviewing committee to write a report that would include any recommendations on the subject. Consistent with that discussion, I do not expect to see any action by the FAA on this topic prior to 2Q, 2017.

Ramp Checks and Program Letters

It is the time of the year to remind members that if they have a glider that is licensed in the "Experimental – Racing & Exhibition" category, they may have to file their annual Program Letter. Anyone with a glider licensed in this category should consult the Limitations document accompanying their aircraft certification paperwork for addition information.

Foreign pilots – license issues

This happens occasionally. Certificates issued under part 61.75 are only valid while the foreign license is valid. If the foreign license becomes invalid the US certificate is also invalid. This typically happens if the foreign certificate is only valid if the pilot has a current medical. Without proof that the foreign license is valid, the US license is invalid. The best solution for foreign pilots resident in the US is to get a US pilot certificate issued on the basis of a practical test. You do not need to be a US citizen to get a US pilot license.

3rd Class Medical Update

From the AOPA website (December 9, 2015):

On Dec. 15, the full Senate passed the Pilot’s Bill of Rights 2 by unanimous consent. Next, the legislation will need to pass the House of Representatives before it can be sent to the president to be signed into law. AOPA is doing everything possible to get this done as quickly as we can. After it is signed by the president, the FAA has up to one year to implement any regulatory changes that comply with the new law.

Airspace

TFRs were again prolific this past season; members need to be especially vigilant and check for NOTAMS before flying. Popup TFRs for wildfires was a significant issue.

The issue of MOA expansion in the western US continues to be problematic.

USAF Altitude Chamber issue

We have recently been reminded that the USAF requires that all candidates for hypoxia training and altitude chamber “rides” are required to have a current 3rd Class medical. Apparently there is some confusion on this issue: it is not an FAA requirement for DOD facilities, it is a DOD (USAF) requirement. The FAA also requires a current medical to use their facility in Ok City.

Student Pilot Certificate changes (from the AOPA website, 1/14/16)

The FAA has published a final rule changing the way student pilot certificates will be issued and withdrawing plans to require photos on all pilot certificates, a proposal AOPA vigorously opposed.

Under the new “Student Pilot Application Requirements,” published in the Federal Register Jan. 12, aviation medical examiners (AMEs) will no longer issue student pilot certificates. The majority of future applicants will apply through a flight instructor, but the FAA also has given the option of applying in person through FAA inspectors at their local flight standards district office, designated pilot examiners, or airman certificate

representatives from a Part 141 flight school. Those representatives will accept and process applications (primarily through the FAA's Integrated Airman Certification and Rating Application system) but not issue the certificates, which will be plastic, similar to other airmen certificates. (See this chart for specific details.)

The rule has its roots in the 2004 Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act and an initial notice of proposed rulemaking published in 2010. AOPA has been engaged throughout the process to ensure that the requirements would not be excessively costly or onerous. The association strongly opposed a requirement to put a photo on all pilot certificates, urged the agency to reduce turnaround times for issuing student certificates, and opposed a plan to charge \$22 for the issuance or renewal of a pilot certificate. The FAA has said it will address charges for pilot certificates separately.

The changes, which will prevent flight students from applying for and receiving their certificate on the same day, grew out of a Congressional requirement that all pilot certificate applicants be screened by the TSA before being issued a certificate. The FAA estimates it will take up to three weeks from the time a student applies for a certificate until it is issued.

“We’ll continue to monitor the implementation of this new rule to make sure the FAA is issuing student pilot certificates promptly,” said Justin Barkowski, AOPA director of regulatory affairs. “We don’t want this requirement to unnecessarily delay students from soloing or completing their flight training.”

Unlike current student pilot certificates, the new certificates will not expire. And CFIs will no longer have to endorse the certificate itself, instead putting the endorsement in the student’s logbook.

The new rule takes effect April 1, but student pilots who have been issued paper certificates before that date will be allowed to continue to use them until they expire.

Dataplate

The Data Plate exemption made permanent by the FAA in April, 2010 is still permanent.

<http://www.ssa.org/myhome.asp?mbr=8671991229&show=blog&id=2062>