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Elimination of the Third-Class Medical on the Table – David Wartofsky

TO: The U.S. Department of Transportation
øMay 6, 2009ø AMENDED & FINALø

øProposed Rulemaking: To amend FAAø 3rd Class medical (limited to private pilot, non-commercial, not-for-hire) to include the following: øA valid driver’s license is required to pilot an aircraft,” and øA 3rd Class Medical is only required for operation of aircraft heavier than (an automobile) 6,000 lbs max gross weight.”

øDear Sir,

The Administration is trying to clear up unnecessary regulations. I am escalating above the agency as certain aspects of the task may no longer be necessary, so I anticipate some resistance within the agency to the proposed change.

I own Potomac Airfield, a small airfield near Washington DC. Some time ago a pilot said to me ø...while he was medically approved by the Department of Defense to drive a 65,000 lb, 18-wheel truck loaded with hazmat and nuclear weapons, by FAA medical standards he was not allowed to fly his (3,000 lb) Cessna.”

I briefly reviewed DOT requirements for a Commercial Driverø License (CDL). Although the pilot may or may not have been exactly correct, another pilot recently had a similar experience; medically cleared by the USAF, but denied by FAA.

These inequities stir me from my slumber.

Flying small private aircraft with modern technology is simply not that difficult anymore, little more complex than driving the family car. Unlike years ago, flying no longer requires ønerves of steel” or “eyes of a hawk,” anyone can do it, even the elderly.

Onboard GPS navigation makes it unlikely a pilot will ever become lost. Commonly available XM weather in the cockpit makes a pilot less likely to fly into a thunderstorm than be in an auto accident. In truth, pilot chest-beating aside, the spatial challenge of landing a small aircraft is not significantly more complicated than parallel parking an automobile. While aircraft operate most of their time thousands of feet

away from any other person or object, automobiles are always passing at relatively high speed in close proximity to nearby pedestrians and other vehicles. People are in more danger from passing vehicles on the road, than small aircraft passing overhead. Comparing liability insurance premiums for small private aircraft vs automobiles attests unemotionally and non-politically that the losses, the premiums charged for those losses, and therefore the actual risks, are comparable, if not favoring the small private aircraft.

Continuing to impose more restrictive medical standards on piloting a small private aircraft, than driving an automobile, may be little more than trying to address a perception of greater risk that simply does not exist.

FAAø current medical requirements for operating a small private aircraft are comparable to DOT’s requirements for commercially operating a 65,000lb truck. Although clearly prudent for commercial flight operations, and larger aircraft (whose demands on the operator are significantly higher, and which pose much greater risk to others than any automobile), imposing commercial medical standards onto pilots of a small private family airplanes seems unnecessarily burdensome and needlessly restrictive.

FAA has already recognized a basic driverø license for meeting the medical requirements for operating øLight Sport Aircraftø (LSA). Let us just take that insight one step further.

FAAø medical exemption is currently exclusive to LSA aircraft, artificially creating an unfair, unnecessary, and exclusive market concession for a few LSA manufacturers. FAA Medical standards are literally being exploited by industry to force thousands of older pilots to stop using their certified aircraft; so they must either buy a new LSA or quit flying.

Does that really make sense? Is that really equitable to the pilots?

LSA extremely low weight standards ay in fact be hazardously low, as they are the major contributing factor to LSA accidents.

LSA weight standards appear to have been arbitrarily set by the LSA manufacturers to preclude competition from lower-cost certificated aircraft, including many thousands of much lower-cost used aircraft. Is a small Cessna any more difficult to operate than an LSA aircraft? Not really. To claim otherwise is self-serving.

I propose the medical standards for Light Sport Aircraft should be expanded to include private-pilots of aircraft whose weight and complexity are comparable to automobiles. (AOPA and FAA have evolved the distinction of 6,000 lbs for other applications). If a pilot is safe to drive an automobile, they are probably safe to fly a small airplane. When legitimate medical reasons force a pilot to stop driving, they will lose their driverø license, and for the same legitimate reasons they will be stopped from flying. If a pilot is truly dangerous in a small airplane, they are probably more dangerous in an automobile; but in that arena our society has taken a more balanced view. I say we expand the common-sense medical standards of LSA more equitably across the board.

All pilots dutifully øhang up their spursø sooner or later; as with driving; they are not suicidal, nor do they have any desire to endanger their passengers or anyone else.

A good friend and flight surgeon raised the legitimate issue of the predictable loss of balance that comes with age. I counter than even todayø medical standards fail to address such issues. Furthermore, pilotsø ongoing competency will continue to be assured by existing bi-annual flight review, Instrument Competency Checks, and other more specific, and more effective FAA measures.

I encourage this debate to be engaged by all interested parties. Should a change be enacted, there would be no reduction in safety, and a significant increase in the utility and economy of General Aviation for personal transportation; which is in the common interest of all.”

Thank you,

David Wartofsky, Potomac Airfield
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Special points of interest:

- SAFETY MEETING—
NOVEMBER 30TH
- CHECK OUT THE AIRCRAFT
FOR SALE PAGE 3

Aviation is proof, that given the will, we have the capacity to achieve the impossible.
— Eddie Rickenbacker

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• Do not taxi onto a runway unless you have been cleared to do so.
• Do not taxi onto a runway unless you have been cleared to do so.

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FAA SAFETY MEETING

Fourth (4th) Tuesday Every Month, 7:00 pm. November 30, FAAsteam Safety Meeting. Guest speaker on "Aviation Gasoline". Special Fuel Prices in affect for all Fly-ins/Taxi-ins. Deborah Highsmith 757-348-5862. debhighsmith@yahoo.com. Carol Brackley 713-301-5407, carolav8@att.net.

99'S MEETING

Second (2nd) Tuesday Every Month, 7:00 p.m., Terminal Building, 2nd Floor. Women's Organization of Pilots, Men Welcome! Contact Sophie Thibodeaux 281-391-2958. See <http://www.ninety-nines.org>.

CIVIL AIR PATROL U. S. AIR FORCE AUXILIARY

Disaster Relief, Cadet Training, Air Space Education. Every Tuesday, 7 p.m., white hangar, Eastside of Airport. Membership open to Boys and Girls, Men and Women. THUNDERBIRD COMPOSITE SQUADRON; Contact Val Rose, 281-513-7189, e-mail yrose@cacna.org See <http://tx179.org/>

COMMEMORATIVE AIR FORCE

Historical Aircraft Preservation, rides and meeting facility. Meetings 3rd Sunday of the Month at 2:00 p.m., Hangar B-5. Memberships available. Contact Michael Hiner 281-677-4295, email michaelhiner@yahoo.com. See <http://www.westhoustonsgdn.org/>

EAA CHAPTER 774 MEETING

For Meeting Information and Announcements Contact Geoff Kimbrough 713-818-5048, e-mail geoffkim@pdq.net Great Meetings! Large Turnouts! Join Today.

WOMEN IN AVIATION

For Meeting Information Contact Vicki 812-989-6653, e-mail skydivevkc@suddenlink.net. <http://www.houstonwai.org>

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The Wright brothers flew through the smoke screen of impossibility.
— Dorothea Brande

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Buying an airplane? Basing it at IWS? Free comprehensive advise on tax issues, pre-buys, depreciation and more! For a consultation and support materials call Woody Lesikar at 281-492-2130. Check with your professional licensed provider, then call me for money saving ideas that you won't get anywhere else.

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On Line Scheduling at: www.westhoustonairport.com

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1999 Diamond Motor-glider: Rare & Pristine. 190 TTAE

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Joe Galindo Aircraft Service (Since 1984)	Maintenance and Repairs	Hangar #2 Blue East	281-492-6749
Calkins Aero Service (Since 1985)	Maintenance and Repairs	Hangar #3 Red East	281-579-6674
General Avionics (Since 1995)	Avionics Sales and Service	Hangar #1 White East	281-647-9600
AeroWest Interiors (Since 1997)	Upholstery	Hangar #1 White East	281-398-3821
Aero Clean (Since 1980)	Washing, Waxing & Detailing	Mobile	713-644-6200
The öHö Company (Since 2003)	Aircraft Management Service	Terminal Building	281-829-0020
Aviation Services, Inc. (Since 2003)	Pilot Service/Aircraft Management	Terminal Building	281-829-0020
Energy Aviation	Energyaviation.com	Hangar F-3	281-664-7917
Dr. Edy Hollenberg	Unique Eye Care	Hangar D-2	281-492-8018
Lone Star Rod & Rifle	Purveyors of Fine Sporting Life	Hangar B-1	281-829-3006
Dr. Victor Arellano (Baron Pilot)	FAA Medicals (by appt. only)	15410 Ridge Park Dr. Houston, Tx 77095	281-855-2244-office 281-460-2247-mobile
Houston Light Sport Aviation	LSA Instruction	Green Hangar	832-447-4572



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BOBBY JACKSON, President & Mayor Emeritus, West Houston Airport Subdivision Owners Association, Inc.,
281-647-6681 - volunteer

IWS SUPPORT TEAM:

STEPHANIE GUAJARDO, Customer Service Representative
STACY MARTIN, Customer Service Representative
TAMI CLAYTON, Customer Service Representative
BRIAN PADAR, Pro-Pilot, Certified Flight Instructor
TYLER YURCHEVICH, Pro-Pilot, Certified Flight Instructor
BRYANT ELKINS, Pro-Pilot, Certified Flight Instructor
JACOB SANGSTER, Pro-Pilot, Certified Flight Instructor
THOMAS LONG, Linecrew Technician***
MIKE WHITE, Linecrew Technician***
SCOTT BEAUDOIN, Linecrew Technician***
EMILY SEYMOUR, Linecrew Technician**
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JEFF HIGLEY, Linecrew Technician
STEVE COLE, Linecrew Technician

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