



IAOPA (Europe) e-newsletter



Welcome to the August 2010 enews of IAOPA Europe, which goes out to 23,000 aircraft owners and pilots in 27 countries across the continent

New maintenance shock for GA in Sweden

EASA's first gift to general aviation, the Part M maintenance requirements, continue to cause chaos. Lars Hjelmberg of AOPA Sweden reports that aircraft owners are being required to produce documentation going back more than 20 years. "Any entry in the maintenance logbook must now be available with the original papers from the workshop - the invoice copy is not sufficient," Lars says. "For my 1988 PA-28 I have had to present the original workshop papers from February 1989 showing how the heater in the engine compartment was installed, even if the log-book entry was 100% correct, reference was made to a Swedish STC, and the thing has worked perfectly for more than 20 years. I had to prove that the mechanic had used the correct parts and installed them correctly, regardless of the fact that the aircraft had had its airworthiness certificate renewed during all the intervening years by the CAA and that the aircraft been flight tested by CAA staff twice for airworthiness, with log book entries stamped by the CAA."

Lars's aircraft was held in maintenance for 45 days while all these boxes were ticked, but he is lucky because he has owned the aircraft from new and has kept all the papers. Those aircraft whose documents do not go back for decades are technically unairworthy. AOPA Sweden is questioning the legality of these requirements.

The Swedish CAA also now insists that all recommendations from type certificate holders must be treated as mandatory, introducing a whole new level of costly, bureaucratic and pointless work. For the PA-28, for instance, there is now a mandatory check of battery water every 30 days, lubrication of rubber door seals every 30 days, cleaning of fuel bowl every 30 days, change of engine oil every four months and much more, regardless of times flown. Part M continues to be a costly and time-consuming distraction for the GA industry, and its imposition has provided zero safety benefit.

EASA and safety risks

Over-regulation by EASA is the most significant safety issue facing general aviation in Europe, says IAOPA Senior Vice President Martin Robinson. The Agency's prescriptive and endlessly detailed regulation, created despite a lack of data on which to base it, will drive the industry to find ways to circumvent the rules, leading to a fragmented and more dangerous approach to operations.

Mr Robinson is urging the UK CAA, which is embarking on another strategic review of its performance, to be more robust in the guidance it gives to EASA. CAA officials have been guilty of "sitting on their hands", he says, when issues which impinge on safety have been discussed in EASA forums. This must change.

“We are lucky in the United Kingdom in that all domestic regulation must be evidence-based and a safety case must be proven for every new demand that is made of industry,” he says. “That approach does not apply at EASA, which is making rules on the basis of perceptions and prejudices rather than on data.

“It is an article of faith in Britain that bad regulation will lead those affected to find ways around the problems that are created. That is not acceptable, particularly in aviation where everyone needs to be operating under the same rules. With EASA we are creating a serious safety issue, which is the opposite of what was intended.

“Even the perception of over-regulation is damaging. Part M was a bad start, and GA now has the perception that EASA will over-regulate our activities. The EASA assumption seems to be that if you increase regulation you make the system safer, but this is not the case. This why we ask for a risk-based approach, based on good quality data. Regulations should be clear and simple to follow, and there should be regulation only where there is a clear need.

“All European AOPAs should pressure their CAAs or transport officials to take a stronger line with EASA and to speak out when there is a risk that safety will be compromised.”

Strasser wins Safety Award

Charles Strasser, Chairman of AOPA UK's Channel Islands Region, has won the Civil Aviation Authority's General Aviation Safety Award for his work on what is known as the 'Strasser Scheme' under which aerodromes agree to waive landing charges in case of genuine emergency or unplanned weather diversion. Charles began his Scheme, which is believed to be unique in the world, twelve years ago following a CAA report which identified a reluctance to land at expensive airfields as a factor in aviation accidents. He has so far induced 204 airfields to undertake not to charge - only eight airfields in the UK have refused. Signing up airfields and policing the Scheme in case of dispute has cost Charles thousands of hours of work, which has now been recognised by the CAA. The citation for the award says the Strasser Scheme “has had a remarkable influence on GA flight safety since its inception”.

Charles Strasser, still an active pilot at the age of 83 - he flew his Seneca II from Jersey to Israel for the IAOPA World Assembly in Tel Aviv in June - was born in Czechoslovakia but has lived in England for 70 years. He hopes the CAA Award will spur the aerodromes which have not joined the Scheme to sign up - indeed, one of the holdouts, Birmingham, signed up to the Scheme after the CAA's announcement.



FAA requires registration renewals

Owners of all N-registered aircraft in Europe must re-register their planes as part of an effort by the American FAA to clear the deadwood out of the system and make life more difficult for shady operators around the world. The FAA has 370,000 aircraft on its registry but believes up to 100,000 of them may be defunct for various reasons. All those who do not re-register will be cancelled.

Existing regulations require owners to report the sale, scrapping or destruction of an aircraft, or a change of address, but many owners have not complied with those requirements, according to the FAA. In future, aircraft will have to be re-registered every three years. Cost is variously pitched somewhere between \$5 and \$130 - AOPA in the US is concerned that this fee should not rise to become a revenue source.

The FAA has laid down a specific schedule for re-registration, and private owners should check with their Trusts to ensure they get their paperwork in on time. Re-registration can be accomplished online if there are no changes, but where data has changed they must be submitted by post. The process begins on November 1st and ends in December 2013.

Good trusts are already ahead of the game. Faith Al Egaily of Southern Aircraft Consultancy, the biggest N-reg trust in the UK, says: "The FAA are very keen to improve the accuracy of their records, partly in order to combat terrorism, money-laundering and drug smuggling. This is a laudable aim, although it's unfortunate that it comes with fees and administrative costs."

100 landings in 24 hours

AOPA France has taken part in a unique challenge designed to impress upon the French people the versatility of general aviation. France has more than 450 airfields and airports opened to all aircraft, not including private airfields, farm strips and ultralight fields, and AOPA France is fighting to keep all fields open to all pilots. In order to demonstrate that nowhere in France is more than 15 minutes from an airfield, teams of pilots set out to land at more than 100 airfields in a day. The AOPA team comprised Jacques Callies, founder of the largest French aviation magazine, *Aviation & Pilote*, Patrick Charrier, CFI and AOPA France President, Pierre Beria, AOPA France treasurer, Simon Auffret, Erick Stemmler and Emmanuel Davidson, AOPA France executive vice-president. They flew a 1974 Cessna Skylane fitted with an SMA diesel engine and glass cockpit and landed at 108 airfields, covering 1,914 nm between 10:15am and 10:12 am next day. Of the 11 teams involved, six achieved the 100-airfield target. Emmanuel Davidson says: "It's probably the toughest thing we have done in the plane. All felt the fatigue and the stress; sometimes you had less than five minutes between take-off, cruise and entering a new pattern."

Invitation to AOPA UK fly-in

AOPA UK is organising a fly-in at Duxford, 30 miles north of London, on September 18th and all European members are welcome. As well as AOPA figures, speakers will include Eric Sivel, deputy head of rulemaking at EASA, and Ben Alcott, head of group safety services at the UK CAA. There will be prize competitions including concours d'elegance and furthest distance flown; Duxford is one of the finest GA airfields in Britain and is home to the Imperial War Museum aircraft collection - see <http://duxford.iwm.org.uk/>. For details of the fly-in see www.aopa.co.uk

Italy VFR guide in English

Massimo Levi of AOPA Italy reports that Mr Guido Medici of Avioportolano Italia has published an English-language version of his general aviation manual for Italy, providing not only the necessary aeronautical information required to fly to Italian airstrips but giving useful information on hotels, restaurants and tourist sites in all areas of the country. For information see www.avioportolano.it

