

LEGISLATION NEWS

Sequestration

Budget cuts which occurred in 2013 are still in place. It is thought that additional money will be provided to the FAA this year, but specifics are not known at this time.

Status of Third Class Medicals

As of early April 2014, the FAA has begun the rulemaking process (called "Private Pilot Privileges without a Medical Certificate") to consider allowing private pilots to fly without Third Class medical certification under certain circumstances. AOPA and EAA jointly petitioned the FAA in 2012 to allow pilots to operate aircraft without a Third Class medical if they take an online course, self-certify and hold a valid driver's license.

Legislation is also pending in Congress (called "General Aviation Pilot Protection Act") which goes further than the joint EAA-AOPA proposal. The House and Senate bills call for pilots to be exempt based on the following: a non-commercial VFR flight; aircraft weight up to 6,000 pounds; no more than 6 seats; carry up to 5 passengers; fly at altitudes below 14,000 feet MSL; and, fly no faster than 250 knots.

Customs & Border Patrol Stops

Be cognizant when flying to/from different states. Law enforcement agencies are known to be approaching pilots upon landing and conducting searches. Be aware of your rights but also be as non-confrontational as possible. If you are an AOPA member, they request you notify them of any such stops.

User Fees

The 2015 fiscal year spending plan released in early March 2014 by the White House once again includes a \$100-per-flight "surcharge". This continues to be opposed by many members of Congress, and various groups such as AOPA, EAA, and NBAA.

Some Equipment Suffixes Replaced on Domestic Flight Plans

As of the end of October 2013, some equipment suffixes used in domestic flight plans were replaced. If you previously filed with suffixes /R, /Q, /E, /F, /J, and /K, you are now required to use one of four remaining suffixes:

- RNAV capability with GNSS and with RVSM: **/L**
- RNAV capability with GNSS and without RVSM: **/G**
- RNAV capability without GNSS and with RVSM: **/Z**
- RNAV capability without GNSS and without RVSM: **/I**

Remember that the ICAO flight plan form is encouraged for domestic operations and required for flights crossing an international border.

Finally, on the FAA's website (www.faa.gov), there are real-time links to TFRs (Temporary Flight Restrictions), SUA (Special Use Airspace), and a variety of books and manuals (including the Airport/Facility Directory). I will be working our webmaster, to get these links put on our Section website so they are more user-friendly to access. Other links and information will be forthcoming as well.

Respectfully,
Jill Shockley
South Central Section Legislation Advisor