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FAA FIRC Facts

FAA AFS-810 Flight Standards Certification and General Aviation Operations
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FAA FIRC Headlines:

- Runway Incursion Awareness Mandates Coming
- New Part 61, 91, and 141 Rules Happen October 20
- ACRs Becoming Easier to Get
- Big Changes Coming to the WINGS Program
- CFI Student PD Letters About to Happen

Just a reminder: – be sure to check the FIRC website regularly (say, once a month or so). It's the first place where new FIRC-related info will be posted.



A New Push for Runway Incursion Awareness

In the last newsletter I talked about how the issue of pilot deviations was a great teaching opportunity for the FIRC environment and most of you embraced it. In fact, most of you had already been teaching the topic. Of course, of the three broad areas of pilot deviation (airspace violations, altitude excursions, and runway incursions) the issue of runway incursions is the most significant. And that's why it's a required core topic.

Unfortunately, it's still a "hot" topic. We all wish that through all of our efforts the issue would simply dwindle into insignificance. Sorry . . . Not happening. Not by a long shot. And as a result, there's a new push. A new and even more powerful emphasis is being placed on the topic that's going to affect you as a FIRC operator, your attending CFI renewal candidates, and their students.

Several new mandates are coming very soon. First, a letter is going to be sent to all FIRC providers instructing you to increase your emphasis on the topic of runway incursion avoidance. You are going to be required to

issue to all attendees a copy of the Runway Incursion Prevention Best Practices, or, if you're an on-line FIRC, post it in such a manner that your attendee must download it (copy attached). Mention of this action must be made in any future TCO submissions for renewal. Any FAA inspectors monitoring your FIRC will specifically be looking for thorough coverage of the topic.

Next, a Notice has just been published mandating FAA inspectors to specifically observe and, where applicable, test for runway incursion prevention knowledge and practices whenever they interact with airmen. CFI candidates are going to be closely examined on the topic during their initial and add-on ratings, as well as during any observations.

Examiners are going to be observed to ensure that they are testing thoroughly on the topic. Applicants for all certificates and ratings are to be tested on the subject. Flight reviews are going to be required to include coverage of surface operations and runway incursion avoidance.

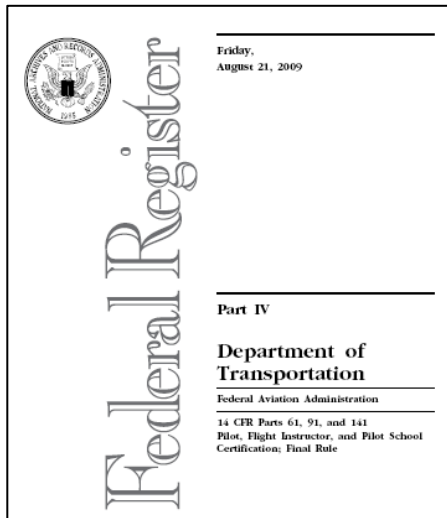
FAA Inspectors are being instructed to increase their surveillance activities of part 141 pilot schools to ensure that they have incorporated wrong runway departure information into their training and operations.

The Notice number is N 8900.92 and was published on September 30, 2009. You can find it on FSIMS at: <http://fsims.faa.gov/PICResults.aspx?mode=Publication&doctype=Notices> or you can just Google "FAA Notice N 8900.92" (space after N, no quotes) and the second return on the list will take you to the FSIMS page. It'll be near the bottom of the page. TELL your attendees!

This is a heads-up to everyone. Be sure that your attendees KNOW the best practices for surface operations and runway incursion avoidance. Be sure that your attendees KNOW to teach it to their students because *if they don't, their students are going to fail their check rides.*

Folks, this is a serious, take-no-prisoners action that's coming. It's easy to be prepared; it could hurt you if you're not!

New 61, 91, 141 Rules Out October 20



By now you should all be aware of the new part 61, 91 and 141 rules becoming active on October 20. Most are pretty minor, but many will have a direct bearing on what is being taught to students, and instructors need to be aware of them. For example, student pilot certificate validity periods for those under 40 has been extended, some new instructor endorsements for additional aircraft class ratings are now required, changes in the al-

lowed use of ATDs for instrument recency of experience, to name just a few. I certainly can't go over all of them here, but you can find it all in the Federal Register, Volume 74, Number 161, Friday, August 21, 2009, at: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/>. In the "2009 (Volume 74) Only" quick search box, put in "part 61" and hit "submit". The second result down on the list of results will be it.

This is one of those times for FIRC's to shine! It's our opportunity for the FIRC to serve the flight instructor community in the same way any other professional conference serves other professionals: to provide critically important information in a timely manner so the attendee can better and more safely do their job. Use your "bully pulpits" to get the word out!

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Airman Certification Representatives Easier to Get

Having an Airman Certification Representative (ACR) employed by your FIRC offers huge benefits for your operation and for your CFI renewal attendees. Being a "one-stop-shop" for your clients makes their lives easier since they don't have to go anywhere else to complete their renewal. It's certainly great for you to advertise that you can handle all of your attendees' renewal needs (well – most, anyhow). Plus it benefits the local FSDO since the ACR deals directly with AFS-760, relieving the FSDO of the administrative duties of CFI renewal.

Problem: To qualify, you must have been a FIRC for at least one year, have issued

250 graduation certificates in the past year, have conducted at least 10 FIRC's in the past year, and expect to do it all over again next year. Well, this pretty much eliminates all but a handful of providers.

Solution: Change the requirements. Well, we're doing just that. Both the FIRC providers and the FAA alike recognized the benefits to everyone of having ACRs associated with the FIRC's. So, we've rewritten the guidance to specify that a FIRC must have issued only 10 graduation certificates in the past year, and have given only one FIRC in that same period. The one year of experience

still stands. BUT... FSDOs will now have much more latitude to decide whether or not they wish to train and oversee ACRs and how many. So, the guidance is going to state those new, recommended lower guideline minimums but will allow deviation from them "at the discretion of the jurisdictional FSDO." This means that a whole lot of you may have more opportunity than ever before to employ ACRs in your operation. And this is a good thing. The guidance is still in internal finalization so it's not there quite yet. But expect it soon!



Big Changes Coming to WINGS

The WINGS Pilot Proficiency Program is a core topic for all FIRCs. Everyone is teaching a module on it, some with perhaps more enthusiasm than others. We understand.

When WINGS changed to its “new and improved” electronic-based format, we were hopeful that this would usher in a new era of higher training standards based on known accident factors and result in fewer accidents and incidents. There was, however, a minor problem: we gave a party and no one showed up.

While the new WINGS was instituted with the best of intentions, we failed to perform necessary “human factors” analyses. We know *that* result so there’s no need to spell it out.

We all know the old expression “I may be dumb but I ain’t stupid!” Well, we ain’t, and we’ve seen the error of our ways. We’ve enlisted user-groups, user-testers, alphabet groups, and just about everybody we could think of to tell us what we did wrong (there was little shyness to be found there), and what we should be doing to make it right. And we’ve listened.

The result: we’re nearing completion of the final beta development of the now new *new*

and improved *easy* WINGS Pilot Proficiency Program. And I really want to emphasize “EASY.”

In our development we’ve employed the “elevator brief” philosophy: if you can’t tell it in a single elevator trip (and I don’t mean up the Sears Tower), then it’s too complex.

So, here’s the elevator brief: There will be three levels of WINGS: Proficient, Advanced, and Master. Within each there are an unlimited number of phases. Phases earned are never lost and remain valid for 12 months from completion.

To earn a phase, pilots will need to cover 3 ground topics (on-line or live) to include Aeronautical Decision Making, Performance and Limitations, and a third suggested topic, and 3 flight areas to include Take-offs and Landings, Positive Aircraft Control, and Basic Flying Skills. These will be tuned to the Level sought. There are no wacky credits, half-credits, color icons or other unnecessarily complicated stuff. Just pick a course and take it. There *will* be some math involved. For example, if you need to take 3 topics, and you’ve just taken 1, how many more do you have to take? (Uhhhh . . . just give me a minute here, I think I’ve got it . . .)

No minimum flight times are involved. Flight proficiency will be based on the PTS. The Proficient award will be linked to the Private standards, the Advanced award to the commercial standards, and the Master to the ATP standards.

Provision is made for folks who don’t or won’t use a computer. When (if) you do use the computer you will never be more than two clicks away from where you need to be. Neither the pilot nor the instructor needs to join anything.

Any phase will serve to meet the flight review requirements. Instructors will be able to renew their certificates through WINGS training given.

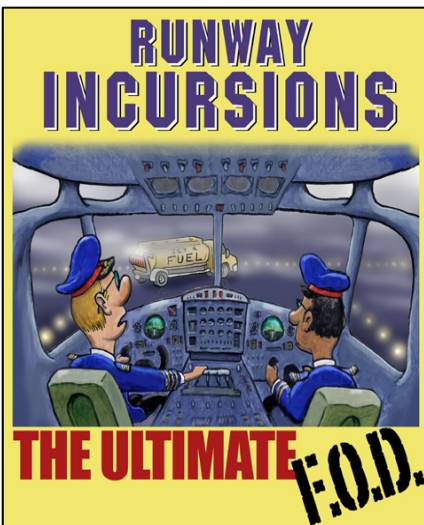
And that’s about it. “*Third floor please, sporting goods and ladies shoes*”

So, *WHEN* is this going to happen? The FAASTeam is shooting for early 2010. The WINGS AC is currently being developed and will be released at the same time as the new “easy” WINGS is rolled out.

You know what this means for you! Get ready to update your WINGS module and revel in the rare opportunity to share some particularly good news with your attendees! I’ll keep you posted – stay tuned . . .



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Student Pilot Deviation Letters to CFIs Closer

Another heads-up. In the last newsletter I discussed the coming CFI information letters. Well, they’re about to begin rolling off the presses.

Recall that the FAA, during its investigation of a pilot deviation, is going to determine who the last instructor was who endorsed the pilot involved in the pilot deviation for either a private, commercial, or Instrument rating, or who gave

that pilot a flight review. This is conditional, however. The endorsement or flight review must have been given within the 12 months prior to the date of the pilot deviation.

You should let your folks know that this is coming but not to sweat it. These are going to be information letters only. They are in no way a reflection on the ability of the instructor nor are they punitive in any way.

It’s just another way to enhance awareness in the pilot community.

The idea is to make instructors aware of just how close to all of us this problem is and that it could happen to anybody. Even our own students! So, we should all take the extra effort to make the issue of pilot deviations a topic in any and every instructional interaction.