Salt Lake City Department of Airports

GENERAL AVIATION NEWS

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SLC GA HANGARS PAINTING STATUS

SLCDA painters are power washing and painting general aviation hangars on the east side of Salt Lake City International Airport. Rows 8 and 9 are complete. Due to weather and other considerations the process is taking longer than anticipated.

Properties Specialist Mike Rawson will contact tenants several weeks in advance to offer alternative tie-down space for tenants if they desire to move their aircraft during the painting process. Please allow approximately two weeks per row for the work to be completed.

Contact Mike Rawson at 801-575-2894 or GA Manager Steve Jackson at 801-647-5532 with questions.

THOU SHALT NOT… VIOLATING FARs

Sometimes you look at an FAR and have to scratch your head. What, you ask yourself, can that possibly have to do with flight safety? The various rules, placards and limitations seem to be written more for the FAA's lawyers than for pilots and their passengers.

To new GA pilots, a lot of the rules seem difficult to understand. It takes experience before one can fully understand. The reasoning behind some of the rules is based on safety, but that's not immediately apparent at face value.

Complicating the need to understand the regs is the legalese involved. You and I – and probably most FAA inspectors – would prefer to have the FARs written in plain and simple English. However, we are dealing with legal administrative rules that have potentially severe legal penalties when violated. As such, there is a legal process wherein a rule is proposed and adopted.

The FARs can't cover everything, nor would most pilots want them to. The question remains, when is violation of the rules unsafe, and when is it merely a violation?

Busting VFR Weather Minimums… There were a surprising number of pilot submittals to the ASRS regarding violations of basic VFR weather minimums. Sometimes the submitters simply found themselves getting trapped by lowering weather conditions. Almost all of the pilots in this group did not have an instrument rating. Lowering ceilings and visibility definitely left these pilots with no way out.

There were quite a few cases of pilots inadvertently operating in Class E airspace when the weather dropped below VFR minimums. In most of these cases, the weather was marginal VFR and hovering close to the VFR minimums. These pilots failed to get a weather briefing to see if the weather was reported.

There were several submissions from pilots who were on an instrument approach and broke out of the low overcast only to find a small aircraft operating at the base of the clouds.

There really is logic to those rules about clearances from clouds when you're VFR, but it isn't being communicated very well. To private pilots without instrument ratings, they often don't make much sense. Twenty years later they make more sense. Our aviation educators need to find a better way to piece this information together so that it makes more sense sooner in a pilot's flying career.

Inadequate Fuel Reserves… Most pilots, at some point in their careers, have landed with very little fuel in the tanks. There certainly have been a huge number of accidents in which the airplane experienced fuel exhaustion, which of course violates the FARs. How many pilots have landed without a 30-minute fuel reserve in the tanks? If you happen to dip into the reserves due to an unanticipated delay, then the fuel reserve fulfilled its original intent. But thirty minutes of fuel is nothing if you've returned to your home airport and found that someone has landed gear up, or maybe lost control during the landing roll out, struck a landing light and ground looped on the runway. In these cases, the runway can be closed for the better part of a day. There are vast spaces in the West where the nearest airport is more than 30 minutes away and you wouldn't have the fuel to reach another airport. You may want to consider using IFR flight planning requirements for your VRF flight. Plan for taxi delays, ATC generated delays, head winds, fuel for an approach into the destination, a missed approach/go around, diversion to an alternate, then a 45-minute cushion on top of that.

This may seem extraordinarily conservative, but at the very minimum, you should plan every VFR flight with the assumption that your fuel consumption will be 15 percent higher than the book, your true airspeed will be 10 knots slower than the book, you will be assigned at least 15 minutes of holding at your original destination, and you will have to divert to an acceptable alternate. You will need 30 to 45 minutes of reserve on top of this.
That may seem a bit excessive, but remember Murphy's Laws always seem to conspire against you. Remember, you can never have too much air below you, too much runway in front of you, nor too much fuel in the tanks.

No Current Medical… The rules require you to carry your medical and pilot certificates on your person while flying. So maybe you forgot your wallet or took your license out at your last physical and forgot to place it back. On the other hand, maybe you're one of the people flying without a medical or with known medical deficiencies.

Inadvertently forgetting your medical certificate won't cause the aircraft to crash. Having a valid medical with you is a legal requirement, but not much of a safety issue. Being fit to fly is another matter, which brings us to another topic.

Self-Medication… Side effects from medicines, including over-the-counter medicines, can drastically affect your sensory, perceptual, cognitive or psycho-motor functions. The second reason to avoid drugs while flying is that, given individual variations in body chemistry, a drug can have different effects on different individuals. Third, interactions with other drugs can be very serious. Even the use of herbal and homeopathic remedies must be considered. Some herbal remedies can have very strong effects on the body. If in doubt, seek an informed expert opinion regarding the proper use, effects and side-effects of these substances.

Airspace Violations… The workload for the pilot, especially when flying in the single pilot configuration, increases substantially when navigating around complex airspace and attempting to obtain clearances for operating within adjacent sectors of Class B, C and D airspace.

Flying to an airport that was underneath or immediately adjacent to Class B airspace; attempting to skirt around the Class B airspace; problems getting a clearance to penetrate the airspace; entering control zones without an ATC clearance when the weather was below that allowed for VFR operations; pilots attempted to contact ATC on the wrong radio frequency; inadvertently entering Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) areas…all can be problematic. When in doubt… ask!

Disobeying an ATC Clearance… Failure to follow an ATC clearance can eat into the safety margin. Many of the reported instances deal with communications problems. Congested radio frequencies were all too common.

Failure to understand the ATC clearance can always be a problem. Pilots weren't comfortable communicating with ATC and didn't seem to communicate on a frequent basis with ATC facilities.

Most of the reported incidents occurred in busy terminal airspace. As congested as certain pieces of the sky are getting, it behooves every pilot to be proficient in their communications with ATC and to operate smoothly and safely within the system.

Approach Minimums… Low visibility approaches are to be taken seriously. Part 91 pilots are allowed to shoot an approach regardless of the ground visibility. That is, they can go to minimums and take a peek. Operators under Part 135 and Part 121 aren't allowed to shoot an approach unless the visibility is reported above minimums, and this is a black and white rule.

There are a lot of reasons why executing approaches below minimums is a dumb idea. Not all ILS signals have the same signal strength. Some glide slope signals suffer from distortion as they near the ground. Some glide slope signals are barely within specifications at decision height and are unreliable from decision height to the ground. Glide slope signals also can be distorted by heavy snow.

The circumstances behind busting minimums vary. In the scariest circumstances, pilots run low on fuel and don't have the fuel to divert anywhere else… trapped with no way out.

In an emergency, you may be forced with making such an unpalatable approach, but an approach minimum is there for a reason.

Do-It-Yourself Repairs

Substituting a bolt may seem harmless, but you could be setting the stage for component failure. Whenever parts of dissimilar materials are placed in contact with each other, each material has a certain affinity for electrons. This can create a galvanic reaction, which is one of the major causes of corrosion.

HELPFUL POINTS OF CONTACT

For GA operational, facilities maintenance, aviation newsletter, airfield, and SLC Title 16 questions call: Steve Jackson, SLCDA General Aviation Manager, 801-647-5532 or e-mail at steve.jackson@slcgov.com.

For hangar lease and repair questions call: Mike Rawson, Properties Management Specialist, at 801-575-2894 or e-mail at mike.rawson@slcgov.com.

For aviation security questions call: Connie Proctor at 801-575-2401.

For gate access problems call: Airport Control Center at 801-575-2401.

For emergencies call: at SLCIA, 801-575-2405
at TVY or U42, 911 then 801-575-2405

The shape of a load-bearing component can be critical. This is why we should be concerned about slight dents in load-bearing structures, and reasons why home repairs should be viewed with some skepticism. Major repairs ought to be performed by a certified airframe mechanic, who will perform the repair according to approved methods.

On balance, many of the FARs do have safety as the underlying reasoning, even though it may not seem like it at first glance. Mandating, legislating and enforcing safety is not easy, and some rules get excessively complicated. Only examining the underlying goals of the rules can help sort out whether a violation is a safety hazard or a legal one.

GA HANGAR INSPECTIONS UNDERWAY

General Aviation and corporate hangar inspections were started in June and will continue into August. SLDCA Properties Specialist Mike Rawson (801-575-2894) will mail remaining notification letters prior to August 10th.

ELECTRONIC GA NEWS OPTION

If you would like to receive the Salt Lake City Department of Airports' monthly general aviation newsletter by e-mail, send a request including your current e-mail address to: steve.jackson@slcgov.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

Leading Edge Aviation Logan (LGU) - Leading Edge Aviation has a free breakfast in their hangar on the 2nd Saturday of each month from 8:00 am to 10:00 am. For more information about Leading Edge events, visit www.leaviation.com

Wendover Airfield (ENV) is giving two for one casino buffet coupons with a minimum 10 gallon fuel purchase. The Wendover Airfield Airshow is scheduled for Saturday September 25. Visit www.wendoverairbase.com/airshow for more information

FAA PILOT SAFETY SEMINARS

FAASTEAM Sponsored events for August 2010

CFI & Pilot Workshop # 8 will be held at the following locations and dates:

Aug 11, SLC, UT Kibbie Executive Terminal – 6:00 P.M.
Aug 31, Cedar City, UT (CDC), Sphere One Aviation – 6:00 P.M.
Sep 1, St. George, UT (SGU), Dixie College Hangar – 6:00 P.M.
Sep 3, South Valley Airport (U42), Air Center – 6:00 P.M.

Other Safety Meetings:

Aug 26, Spanish Fork, UT Airport (U77) –7:00 P.M.
Sep 1, Vernal, UT Airport (VEL) –7:00 P.M.

Additional information is available at www.faasafety.gov under "events" or contact Dennis Seals, FAA Safety Program Manager at 801-257-5056.