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CFIDarren Newsletter

MedXpress, Back to Basics, No More Medicals?

Issue #51

July 17, 2012

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Quote of the Month

"There's a big difference between a pilot and an aviator. One is a technician, the other is an artist in love with flight."

- E Jeppesen

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Thank you for taking the time to read this safety message. We all face the challenges of flying less (due to cost) and regulatory complexity increasing. This newsletter is meant to stay in touch with those interested in general aviation, airport operations, and flight safety. I hope that it keeps you in touch with your love of aviation.

This newsletter brings a reminder about the upcoming change to the FAA Medical Certificate process. We end this month's newsletter with a stunning Earth flyover as our video of the month.

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Thanks for your continued support... Darren

Getting an FAA Medical Soon?

As we reported in an earlier edition of this newsletter, we don't want you to forget MedXpress for Your FAA Medical. Soon it's mandatory, effective October 1, 2012. The FAA MedXpress system allows for electronic completion of FAA Form 8500-8, which is the information necessary to renew your FAA Medical. Once the form is completed online, it will be available for you AME to download and review at the time of your medical.

After you've logged in and completed the form, you will receive a "Confirmation Number" and can print a pdf version for your records. Keep a printed copy of your online form or the confirmation number with you when you show up for your medical, and they will use it to pull up the electronic copy at the office. The online form cannot be filled out more than 60 days prior to your medical, and no one at the FAA reviews the information on the form until your AME submits your final physical.

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Deadly Private-Plane Crashes Prompt U.S. Call for Basics

Note: This article reprinted from Business Week gave such a clear understanding of what's happening to us in General Aviation, I thought it was important to share in this newsletter.

The last fatal airline crash killed 50 people when a Colgan Air flight slammed into a neighborhood near Buffalo, New York, in February 2009. **Private plane wrecks since then have killed 30 times as many.**

The crash rate on private-pilot flights -- up 20 percent since 2000 -- contrasts with a roughly 85 percent drop in accidents on commercial jetliners, said Earl Weener, a member of the NTSB. The disparity is a dark spot on



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Pilot's Radio Guide

decades of aviation-safety improvements, and the board is weighing how to make non-commercial flying less hazardous.

Many accidents have resulted from pilots' inattention to basics, according to research by a group created by industry and the federal government last year. Pilots have overloaded planes, failed to check weather reports, and made flying mistakes that caused planes to lose lift or go out of control. "More often than not it is human factors or a piloting problem," Weener said in a phone interview ahead of today's start of a two-day safety board hearing.

Since the 1990s, commercial-airline crashes due to icing, inadvertently hitting the ground, mid-air collisions, wind shear and other causes have been almost wiped out with improved technology and pilot training, according to NTSB accident statistics.

Sudden Maneuver

A crash May 9, 2009, in Minden, Nevada, that killed five people illustrates that those safety enhancements haven't taken hold in the small-plane world the NTSB will examine. A pilot took four friends on a flight and flew the Beech 95 twin-engine plane low over the conference they'd been attending, according to the safety board.

The 58-year-old pilot, who had almost 5,000 hours of flight experience, made an abrupt, steep turn that caused the plane's wings to lose lift, the investigation found. All five people on the plane died when it nose-dived to the ground. Such sudden maneuvers are a known hazard that can cause severe loss of control, according to an NTSB report.

The accident rates on non-commercial flights known as general aviation, including corporate and instructional flights, have changed little since 2000, according to safety board data.

The accident rate for all general aviation has been about 7 per 100,000 flying hours from 2007 through 2010, Weener said. By comparison, accidents involving private pilots in their own or rented planes, mostly small, single-engine aircraft, averaged about 12 per 100,000 flight hours during the same period, according to Weener. He broke out those numbers from the broader general-aviation statistics.



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Private Flying

The rate of deadly wrecks in such private flying has grown faster than general-aviation accidents as a whole, up 25 percent since 2000. About 1,500 people have died on general-aviation flights since the crash by Pinnacle Airlines Corp. (PNCLQ) (PNCLQ)'s Colgan, Weener said.

"That's part of the reason for the focus" of the NTSB's inquiry, Weener said. The board, which has no regulatory power, recommends safety improvements to government agencies and industry. Seeking ways to stem the fatalities, industry groups and the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration, which regulates private flying and sets safety standards, last year created the General Aviation Joint Steering Committee.

Losing Control

The group found that the largest category of accidents are those in which pilots lose control during flight, Bruce Landsberg, head of the safety arm of the AOPA, based in Frederick, Maryland.

Landsberg, co-chairman of the steering committee, said the panel endorses working with the FAA to make it cheaper for small planes to install a device that warns pilots when wings are in danger of losing lift. Such devices are standard on commercial airliners. [The device they are referring to is an Angle of Attack indicator]

Other frequent crash causes are inadvertently flying into the ground, loss of power and weather-related issues, Landsberg said. Human error underlies the majority of personal flight crashes, Landsberg and Weener said.

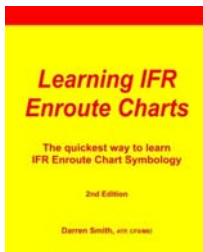
An accident cited on Landsberg's AOPA Air Safety Institute's website highlights how pilot miscalculations can be deadly. On Feb. 15, 2010, a Cessna T337G twin-engine plane crashed near Monmouth County Executive Airport in Farmingdale, New Jersey, as family members of those on board watched. The three adults and two children on the plane died.

Airfield Buzzed

After buzzing the airfield at high speed, the plane pulled into a climb and a section of the right wing came off, according to the NTSB's findings. The plane was overloaded and flying too fast for such a maneuver, the

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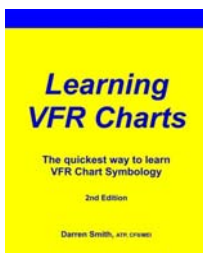
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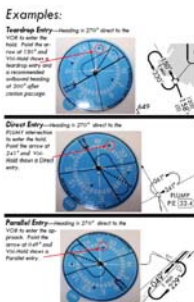
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agency found. Landsberg said the general-aviation community doesn't see a need for additional regulations.

"I don't think you can crash an airplane unless you have broken one and possibly two regulations," Landsberg said. "If everyone flew to the private pilot practical test standards, we would have a pretty good system."

He also pointed to the fact that, however tragic, the numbers of fatalities in plane crashes are far outstripped by those in accidents on the nation's highways --32,885 in 2010, compared with 450 in general aviation.

<http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-06-19/pilots-deadly-private-plane-crashes-prompt-u-dot-s-dot-call-for-basics>

Medicals: While We're On the Topic

AOPA and EAA, representing the interests of its members, are petitioning the FAA for an exemption that would give pilots who fly recreationally the option of getting a third class medical or, instead, participating in a recurrent online education program that will teach them how to self-assess their fitness to fly.

This exemption is being sought for pilots of single engine, 4 seat (or less), fixed gear, 180HP (or less) aircraft. The pilot without a medical would have to remain below 10,000MSL, be VFR at all times, not for hire or furtherance of a business, daytime > 3sm visibility, and within US airspace.

The AOPA/EAA claim is that the petition for exemption provides for a greater level of safety because it provides for:

- Education and conscious medical self-assessment.
- Reasonable operating limitations and restrictions.
- Familiarity in aircraft and operations.

[Click this link to comment on 3rd Class Medicals](#)

Stunning Earth Flyover

With the help of images from NASA's [Image Science and Analysis Laboratory](#), an 18 year old Croatian, Tomislav Safundzic created this incredible time-lapse video of earthly flyovers using shots taken from the International Space Station. The two minute journey includes incredible vistas

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of our gorgeous marble. Along with incredible flyovers of land and sea, some of the sights worth marveling include high-voltage thunderclouds, the neon glow of the Aurora Borealis, and night-time lights of every continent. Everyone can appreciate this perspective.



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