

FAA Grandfathering Existing Aircraft Kits



Existing aircraft kits that have already been approved by the FAA will not be re-evaluated according to a written notice from the FAA, grandfathering them in; however the agency has suspended kit evaluations temporarily while new procedures are developed.

Although kit evaluations have never been required, the FAA performs these as a courtesy in determining whether amateur-built kits could be eligible for proper certifications. Past experiences with evaluations have proved to be “inconsistent determinations regarding regulatory compliance,” says the FAA, which resulted in a need for new regulations and guidelines on proper kit evaluations.

The FAA was further spurred by the development of kits for high-performance pressurized turboprops in which the builders could be assisted by factory employees. The FAA was concerned such “build centers” violated the spirit of the rules requiring the builder to complete more than half of the airplane in order to earn amateur-built status.



FAA Proposes Polished Frost Revisions

The FAA proposed changing Parts 91, 125 and 135, which state pilots can take off if they first polish any frost on the wings, stabilizers and flight controls, to remove the tacit approval of polishing frost. The polished frost rules (found in Parts 91.527(a), 125.221(a) and 135.227(a)), applied to Part 91 large and turbine-

powered aircraft and all aircraft under Part 135, would now include any size fraction-share aircraft under Part 91 Subpart K under the revisions, with an exception: “takeoffs may be made with frost under the wing in the area of the fuel tanks if authorized by the FAA” would remain under Parts 91, 125 and 135.

According to the FAA, there have been numerous accidents after pilots took off without first removing frost from their wings, including 11 known crashes following takeoff after efforts to smooth or polish frost. The FAA now wants pilots to remove frost rather than attempting to smooth it.

