



CoVID 19 and You

by Tom Johnson SSF Trustee

Throughout all of aviation, the current state of affairs with the pandemic virus is affecting the amount of flying we all are doing. Numerous websites report airline traffic, business jets and turboprops, and light aircraft are not flying like they did a year ago

Many of us are not flying our sailplanes.

Soaring, by its very nature, is a community sport. We need multiple people to assemble, stage, launch, and recovery a flight. By necessity, these people are generally in close proximity to one another. Asking glider pilots to stay apart is just not done. We are gregarious, friendly folks who like to get together. Part of the joy of soaring is the great people you have met and known over the years.

But the laws of contagious disease are forcing many of us to stop flying. One of our greatest strengths is now a liability.

But when the time comes to start flying again, will you be ready?

You may be rusty on the basics of flying. It may have been eight to nine months since your last flight. Will you be ready to go? Not only may your basic flying skills be rusty, but so will your judgment and decision making skills. This is simply a fact many of us will have to face. And the sooner we start dealing with it, the better. Using the P.A.V.E. risk management model can be an excellent way to return to flying in an organized, systematic way.

You will need a plan. Whether you are a single pilot renter or owner, a club officer, or a commercial operator, you should start formulating a plan to get back up to speed. This plan should include a basic ground training format and a basic flight training format.

A Ground Training Plan.

While the idea of binge-watching Hallmark Christmas movies is very enticing, we really should be doing things that can keep our minds engaged on soaring. And whatever those ideas are, implement them. Here are some ideas:

1. Arrange a web-meeting for your operation to review procedures.
2. Review your operational documents for currency, validity, and accuracy.
3. Update your aircraft's placards and such.
4. Have a virtual club party though virtual margaritas may prove problematic.
5. Run a virtual ground school class for students and all other pilots
6. Review your logbook and see when you need your three flights to carry passengers (61.57) and your next Flight Review (61.56)
7. Tow-pilots need to maintain towing currency (61.69) by making 3 flights as PIC of a glider being aerotowed, or 3 (real or simulated) flights in a tow-plane **While accompanied by a qualified Tow-Pilot!**
8. Go to FAASafety.gov and take some wings ground programs.

The ideas are only limited by your creativity. All these ideas are focused on keeping your pilots and members engaged with the art of soaring.





A Flight Training Plan.

Once we do start flying again, your operation will have to get everyone checked out again. Again, it will likely be eight or more months since some of us have flown. A tow to 2000 ft AGL and a pattern tow will probably not cut it. Be prepared for multiple flights for each person. Treat each check-out like a Flight Review. Go over as many maneuvers as you can. Box the wake, slack tow-line, turning stalls, and accuracy landings is a good place to start.

And don't forget Condor. If you have it, use it. If you don't have it, maybe you should consider getting it.

You can use Condor to do training, but you can also join in world-wide races. Invent scenarios for you to fly. Be creative. If you need a catalog of scenarios, visit www.soaringsafety.org (I must admit, most, if not all, of the scenarios are things that have actually happened to me or I saw happen. I am not that creative.)

The Human Element

And you must also plan for the human element. Many of us will be, and may continue to be, highly stressed by the events going on. The soaring season may likely be nearly over by the time we get back to it. Be prepared to lose this season. Do not try and cram a full season's worth of soaring into a couple of weeks. Set yourself reasonable goals and work toward them.

And if you think what is proposed here is unique, EAA, AOPA, NBAA, and others are preparing similar articles for their constituencies. They are recommending pilots make their own personal return to flying checklists and plans.

So, keep thinking about soaring, and keep your minds engaged.

Great. Now that this is done, I can put "One Starry Christmas" with Sarah Carter and Damon Runyan back on.

FAA Special Federal Aviation Regulation (SFAR) exemptions effecting Glider operations

On May 4, 2020 the FAA issued a SFAR offering relief for some pilot operations, but it included significant restrictions on some operations, specifically the Flight Review (61.56) exemption DOES NOT APPLY to pilots conducting pleasure flights. The PIC of any and all glider flights MUST have a current Flight Review. If your Flight Review expired while your club or commercial operator was shutdown, you must schedule a review with your favorite instructor or look at the alternate means of compliance (WINGS Phase, new rating or certificate) as specified in 61.56 before you can act as PIC of a glider.

On April 1, 2020 the FAA published an enforcement policy document notifying the public that the FAA would not take enforcement action against pilots who's medical certificate expired between March and May 2020. The May 4 SFAR incorporated that policy and clarified that a pilot who's medical certificate expired in March, April, May, or June 2020 may continue to act as PIC until June 30, 2020. Unless further extended, effected tow-pilots must obtain a new medical certificate by this June 30 date.

The SFAR provides some limited relief for pilots preparing for a practical (flight) test to obtain a new rating or certificate. One of the requirements for the practical test is the completion of a knowledge test within the proceeding 24 calendar months. The SFAR relief extends the expiration date of the





knowledge test 3 calendar months (a total of 27 calendar months). This extension applies to individual test dates, (e.g.; if the expiration date of your knowledge test is April 30, 2020 the new expiration date is July 31, 2020). You must complete the practical test before the new expiration date or you will be required to retake the knowledge test.

Flight Instructor certificates are valid for 24 calendar months. This is the only pilot certificate with an expiration date. 14 CFR 61.197(a)(2) describes 4 methods that an instructor can use to renew their certificate. Instructors who fail to renew before the expiration date printed on their certificate must re-instate their CFI certificate. The SFAR provides relief by allowing a flight instructor who has a certificate expiring in March, April, May, or June 2020 to submit a completed and signed application showing satisfactory completion of one of the renewal methods by June 30, 2020. They will retain their original expiration month.

