



## **PLASTIC PILOT CERTIFICATES REQUIRED by MARCH 2010**

by Burt Compton, SSF Trustee

Still have a paper FAA Pilot Certificate? Perhaps you have an older, but valid certificate with “Glider Aero Tow Only” printed on it? Every pilot is required to obtain a plastic pilot certificate by March 31, 2010. All other paper certificates such as Ground Instructor, Mechanic (Part 65) and those issued under Part 63 must be replaced with plastic ones by March 21, 2013.

The FAA’s mandate is based on the reasoning that plastic certificates are more durable and counterfeit resistant than paper ones. For newly certificated pilots, compliance is automatic, since all new certificates are being issued in plastic. For those who have paper certificates in their wallets, a replacement certificate can be requested online or through the mail. The online process is not too difficult and FAA currently estimates a two-week fulfillment. (I recently applied online and received my plastic certificate exactly one week later.) Details on how to apply are included at the end of this article.

### English Proficient Endorsement

Effective March 5, 2009, FAA mandated compliance with the International Civil Aviation Organization’s (ICAO) rule that all member countries (that includes the USA) issue pilot certificates that state that the pilot is English Proficient if that pilot plans to use the certificate outside of the USA. All new FAA pilot certificates will automatically be issued with the English Proficient endorsement on the back, since proficiency in the English language has been a FAA requirement for basic eligibility for a U.S. Pilot Certificate (all applicants must be able to read, write, speak, and understand English). To satisfy the ICAO requirement for flight outside of the USA, every pilot must request a replacement certificate with the endorsement from FAA. All replacement certificates will automatically be plastic. So if you want to fly as PIC outside the USA, you will need this statement on your US Pilot Certificate.

### Address or Name Change and Lost Certificates

According to CFR 61.60, all pilots, flight instructors and ground instructors must notify the FAA of an address change within 30 days. Address must be physical (no P.O. Boxes.) A name change requires notification and documentation per CFR 61.25. Note that these required notifications do not necessarily generate a

new pilot certificate, as it usually only updates the FAA database. CFR 61.29 gives the process for obtaining a replacement of a lost or destroyed pilot certificate, or a facsimile of an unexpired FAA medical certificate or airman knowledge test report.

#### How to Request a New or Replacement Pilot Certificate

The easiest way to get a new or replacement certificate is on the internet. Go to FAA's Airmen Online Services at

[http://www.faa.gov/licenses\\_certificates/airmen\\_certification/airmen\\_services/](http://www.faa.gov/licenses_certificates/airmen_certification/airmen_services/)

Log in if you already have an account. If you are not yet registered, you must create an account. The FAA assures us that this registration is not for the FAA to spy on you. Registering will also allow you to choose to be notified by the FAA of local flight safety information and FSDO FAAS Team safety seminars. Follow the steps to receive your certificate in about two weeks.

Some older paper pilot certificates may state your category rating as "Glider – Aero Tow". The current online system will not process it so you will need to use the paper application process. The pilot category rating is now only "Glider", with the type of launch (aerotow, ground and self-launch) indicated by an endorsement in your pilot logbook from a CFI-Glider. There are "grandfather" exemptions so read CFR 61.31(j) for the details.

To request a replacement certificate by mail, write to:

Federal Aviation Administration, Airmen Certification Branch, AFS-760,  
P. O. Box 25082  
Oklahoma City, OK 73125-0082.

Your signed, written request must include the following information: Name, date and place of birth, social security number and/or certificate number, the reason for the request, and your current residence address. Include a check for \$2.00 for each replacement certificate requested.

If you still have a paper certificate, or need the "English Only" endorsement if you plan to fly outside the USA, start the replacement process now. The FAA expects a backlog of requests for the plastic replacements certificates in early 2010.

Please visit the FAA website for complete information and to start the process or ask your local FAA Flight Standards District Office FAAS Team Manager for assistance.

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