



IAOPA Bulletin

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So you think you have a hard time getting into the air?

By Roberto Caldas, AAG AOPA-Colombia

While reading recent issues of *AOPA Pilot* I asked myself how reality is perceived and how it affects us in different ways. I find it humorous to see American pilots frustrated by the “over-regulated, over-taxed, and over-controlled North American general aviation.” If they only appreciated how politics, terrorism, corruption, and contraband can, and do, endanger the basic right to fly, taken for granted elsewhere.

In Colombia the right to own an airplane or to become a pilot is a privilege that only a few can aspire to, and even fewer can enjoy because of impractical, redundant, costly, and improvised regulations. Most important, there is a lack of understanding of what general aviation is by the many government institutions that control aviation here.

Public authorities here see general aviation as either a hobby of the elites or an instrument of the criminals. As a hobby of the elites, it is overburdened by high taxes on airplanes, excessive costs of mandatory insurance, costly airport fees, ridiculous flight school prerequisites such as high school or college diplomas, and excessive and intrusive information requirements such as tax reporting, income certificates, and origin of wealth.

Just because GA could be used for criminal purposes, the sole intention to buy an airplane or learn to fly makes one a suspect of illegal in-



tentions. In our country, you have to prove that you are not an outlaw by requesting certification from the police that you are not a criminal, after payment of an investigation fee and presentation of a full professional and economic history covering the prior three years of your life. If you pass, they will give you the first document to achieve your dream: the “antinarcotics certificate” that you will have to renew yearly, just in case you may change your mind.

One needs this certificate to buy an airplane, obtain a pilot license, build a hangar, build or run a landing strip, or manage a flying school or club. You have to ask again and again

The International Council of Aircraft Owner and Pilot Associations represents the interests of more than 470,000 pilots and aircraft owners in 69 countries. Formed in 1962, IAOPA is dedicated to promoting the peaceful uses of general aviation and aerial work worldwide.



for the same instrument if you want to do several of the above listed activities, to the same institutions that already have your information under one name and one identification number. The institution must be paid for the same certificate, for each activity you may undertake, whether it be an airplane purchase, obtaining a license, starting a landing field or flight school, or opening an aeroclub or repair shop.

Upon certification as an honorable citizen, you immediately qualify as elite, and as such, are granted the right to dream with the clouds. As an elite member, you are expected to have a formal education (high school or college diploma) and attend a government-certified flying school. After your training, you will have to sit for a State examination, and, if you pass, you will be entitled to obtain a pilot's license, providing that you also obtained a medical certificate. After 120 hours of classroom training and 120 hours of flight training including 50 solo hours, you are issued a license to fly an ultralight or a Piper Cub. Total cost of investigations, training, and paperwork: about one year and U.S. \$30,000. And this has only been your first contact with our equivalent of your FAA: The UAEAC or Aeronautica Civil.

Now, to go flying, you are required to personally present a flight plan in addition to the same documents that you had to request as a student pilot, a medical certificate, pilot license, personal identification. On top of that you have to leave your fingerprints on the flight plan!

However, flying over most of the country is forbidden, so you have to request authorization *eight days in advance*, to the army or the air force, especially if you plan to remain overnight. In this procedure you have to state the names and identities of all your passengers. Failure to do so, changing your flight plan en route (even because of bad weather), landing on an alternate airport different than the one appearing on your flight plan, or staying longer than stated will precipitate an interven-

tion in which you may be forced to land, be arrested and prosecuted for possible traffic of people, illegal goods, or drugs.

A few months ago, I invited my father to take a sightseeing flight around Bogota, our capital city. My airplane is an all-metal, 100-horsepower, two-seat ultralight, which had all its records up to date. My medical and pilot license, national identification, and police certificates were also up to date. My flight plan was accepted and the flight plan officer gave me the go ahead. But here you also have to pass a mandatory police inspection before every takeoff even if you will be flying right over the airport.

The antinarcotics certificate of my ultralight had expired two days before. The narcotics police officer became instantly an FAA authority, canceled my flight, grounded the airplane, and included me on a list of possible drug dealers. My ultralight was "sealed" with several 7-x-20-inch placards that read "Sealed by the antinarcotics division." My whole life was put on the line and my new status became the talk of the town.

The problem was not that I was carrying drugs or contraband, it was not the result of a diligent police inspection, my problem was not having paid to renew the certification, a sticker that would show the police officer that I am a good citizen.

Today, three months after this incident, and after several letters to the authorities asking them if I was guilty of anything, I have received no answer, but my right to fly was restored after I paid U.S. \$15, the amount needed to renew the antinarcotics certificate. Yesterday I finally flew, and the same officer did not complete a diligent inspection, did not ask for my certificate. He just searched his list of complying airplanes, found that mine was certified and let me go fly.

The pursuit of GA activity in Colombia is not easy to say the least. But, the reward of flight in one's own airplane makes it worth the trouble. We continue to fly in Colombia!

Membership

Early introduction to flight likely to produce pilots



As the number of student pilot starts decline it is important to note that providing an introductory to flight for young people increases the probability that they will go on to become pilots.

The U.S. Experimental Aircraft Association's Young Eagles Program is more successful than any other program at getting young people involved in aviation, the association recently announced. Results of a joint EAA/FAA study matched the names of Young Eagles ages 15 to 34 flown since the program was launched in 1992 with names in the FAA registry. Those who took a Young Eagles flight were 5.4 times more likely to earn a certificate than individuals of the same age who had not received a flight. The study also found that 7.3 percent of all pilots who are younger than 35 are former Young Eagles. That number is projected to grow as the group reaches the age—late thirties to early fifties—when their participation in aviation accelerates, EAA said.

The lesson learned: provide opportunities for young people, especially teenagers, to experience flight and they may become a member of your association in the near future. Make the effort to get them airborne.

Secretariat News

ICAO Unmanned Aircraft Systems circular released

ICAO has been working on guidelines for UAS since 2006. A working group has been considering the many issues surrounding this unique and increasingly popular form of aviation in order to provide guidance to States and others regarding their usage. Frank Hofmann, IAOPA Representative to ICAO, is a charter member of the working group, bringing the general aviation perspective to this emerging form of aviation. The document is intended for use by State governments but also may be purchased from ICAO. In February ICAO released Circular 328 *Unmanned Aircraft Systems* to provide background, perspective and guidance to all concerned regarding their operations. IAOPA input was an integral part of the document, emphasizing the need for the UAS to independently sense and avoid other aircraft and to not require airspace restrictions to accommodate their operations. Hofmann, notes, "Most of our concerns were addressed in the circular, but in this rapidly emerging field all must be alert to any encroachment of the remotely piloted vehicle on general aviation operations. ICAO will continue its inquiries into UAS operations and we will be there to represent GA's interests."

IAOPA-Europe fights EASA charges

Recently a member contacted his national AOPA within Europe regarding a €800 EASA fee for a ferry permit, just to be able to fly his aircraft with only minor airworthiness deficiencies between repair stations. In the past most of Europe has never had to pay for such permits but know that under EASA jurisdiction fees are imposed. IAOPA-Europe Senior Vice President Martin Robinson says, "The problem is related to EASA's huge operating overhead and inefficiencies. IAOPA will insist on a more efficient structure at the next fees and charges review. Moreover, in relation to a permit to fly they should develop pre-set conditions so that they can give clearance without sky-high fees. A prominent large European engine supplier based in the U.K. recently said that under EASA its fees had doubled and could rise again by another 30 percent if the rumoured hike in fees goes ahead; the industry body charged with commenting on the proposal has not yet been formally consulted. We will continue to work with EASA to reduce and eliminate fees."

IAOPA-Europe position on SESAR deployment

The pending shift to the Single European Sky Air Traffic Management Research Programme, SESAR, is designed to improve and facilitate IFR point-to-point operations over Europe for decades to come. IAOPA-Europe is concerned that general aviation interests may not be fully accommodated in the transition to the new system. IAOPA-Europe has made the following statements regarding the new system. It must be:

- Performance-driven, accounting for all aspects of the system, including access equity and interoperability.

- Governed independent of industrial or commercial interest. Fully consult with all system users regarding basic provisions and changes.
- Include provisions for funding operations for which a positive business case cannot be made (the business case for general aviation has been determined to be negative).

IAOPA-Europe Senior Vice President Martin Robinson says that the IAOPA has a good working relationship with SESAR personnel and will continue to work for a smooth transition to the programme's introduction.

Affiliate News

Namibia becomes sixty-ninth IAOPA affiliate

IAOPA President Craig Fuller recently formally recognized AOPA-Namibia affiliation in IAOPA in a letter that stated, in part, "It gives me great pleasure to inform you that the Board of the International Council of Aircraft Owner and Pilot Associations (IAOPA) has approved full membership for AOPA-Namibia. We encourage you to actively participate in IAOPA regional and international activities in support of general aviation. I look forward to working with you in the years to come for the improvement and advancement of general aviation worldwide." AOPA-Namibia President Reinhard Gärtner replied, "AOPA-Namibia's full affiliation as the sixty-ninth member of IAOPA is indeed good news for the country's aviation industry and its stakeholders. Coinciding with our celebrations this week of Namibia's twenty-first year of independence, this can hardly be a more promising omen for the aviation fraternity in Namibia and hopefully for AOPA-International. Being part of an international organization is seen here to be of strategic significance and importance, not only to establish and promote local interests in aviation, but also to enable us to conquer the ever-increasing and threatening hurdles the aviation industry is facing, locally and on an international level. We are all too familiar with the often bureaucratic, overtaxing, and sometimes plain hostile regulatory authorities, not to mention the logistical and financial burdens the industry has to overcome on a daily basis. For this simple reason of survival in the first place, we believe in *Ex Unitate Vires* (Unity is strength)." See the AOPA-Namibia website (sites.google.com/site/aopanamibia)

AOPA-Belize attempts to improve entry/exit facilitation for general aviation

Holger von Bulow, AOPA-Belize vice president, recently noted that AOPA-Belize decided to counter the written and non-written rules and practices that hamper general aviation traveling to and from Belize.

He provided a detailed spreadsheet of arrival procedures for the international pilot that require a minimum of two hours and 20 minutes to complete immigration, customs, airport, and CAA formalities at the only international airport in the country. Reversing the procedure upon departure requires a minimum of two hours.

Von Bulow is a world traveler in his airplane and says that he has rarely seen the number and complexity of procedures experienced in his own country. AOPA-Belize is working with the Ministers of Tourism, Civil Aviation and Culture to improve the procedures involved in entering and exiting Belize in a general aviation aircraft. The IAOPA secretariat has provided applicable ICAO standards and recommended practices for airport facilitation as a basis for communicating recommended changes for the procedures.

Apparently, government officials are listening to and working with AOPA-Belize to improve entry/exit conditions for general aviation operations.

Canadian and U.S. GPS coalition formed

Aviation associations and avionics manufacturers have joined other transportation sectors in launching a coalition to tackle the jamming threat from plans to expand wireless broadband coverage of the United States using a satellite spectrum adjacent to that of GPS. GPS is a key component of NextGen satellite-based air traffic control. AOPA-U.S. is a charter member of this group.

The threat has emerged because of the U.S. Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) January decision to grant LightSquared conditional approval to provide terrestrial broadband services using frequencies reserved for mobile satellite communications. The company plans to build up to 40,000 ground stations transmitting radio signals one billion times more powerful than GPS signals as received on earth could mean 40,000 GPS blank areas—each miles in diameter. LightSquared has developed a filter it says puts a "wall" between its ground-station transmissions and GPS satellite signals. But because GPS receivers must be highly sensitive to acquire the faint signals, it may be impossible to protect them from interference.

U.K. GA confronted with major Olympic restrictions

VFR flight within 30 nm of London will be severely restricted during the summer of 2012 because of airspace restrictions associated with the World Olympic Games. Flights over the greater London area will be prohibited to VFR flight and IFR operations will be subject to strict security provisions. The area outside the immediate London airspace will be restricted to VFR flights that have filed detailed flight plans and are subject to air traffic control instructions.

AOPA-U.K.'s Martin Robinson identified the main issue facing general aviation as one of capacity in the restricted area

and sought guarantees that no aircraft that qualified for entry would be refused access. There are no such guarantees; while NATS says it will recruit extra staff and do its best, it says it has no realistic way of estimating traffic requirements and cannot guarantee entry; indeed, it is possible that at peak times, access will be denied. Robinson stated that AOPA-U.K. will work to mitigate the disruption to general aviation operations caused by this major event.

AOPA-Thailand news

After a period of relative inactivity AOPA-Thailand has resumed operations. AOPA-Thailand International Secretary Tom Claytor sends the following report: "We are pleased with the successful opening of a new private airfield in Phuket (a popular tourist area). Phuket Airpark (www.phuketairpark.com) is 8 nautical miles from Phuket International Airport, so it has been nice to see the cooperation between the owners, the Department of Civil Aviation (DCA), air traffic control, and the international airport to operate and promote general aviation safely.

"The Five-Year Permit regulation by the DCA continues to be the greatest obstacle to general aviation growth in Thailand today. Two years ago, the DCA placed greater restrictions on this rule stating that only the owner of the aircraft and one other pre-named pilot could fly that aircraft. This had a devastating effect on general aviation, because many pilots who owned shares in aircraft could no longer fly it. Many aircraft were sold out of the Kingdom, and a lot of confidence was lost in the system. In addition, renewal of this five-year permit must be signed by the Minister of Transport, and due to political problems and other reasons, it can take three to six months to have a permit renewed once it expires. There is no other country in the world that has this five-year permit requirement, and it is greatly hampering general aviation growth in Thailand. AOPA-Thailand would welcome dialogue from any other countries that have encountered similar obstacles to growth."

Safety Corner

'Nall Report' released

The 2010 edition of the popular Air Safety Institute *Nall Report*, detailing and analyzing U.S. general aviation accidents has been released and may be downloaded at <http://www.aopa.org/asf/publications/10nall.pdf>. The report contains a variety of accident statistics and commentary that will provide all operators of general aviation aircraft with valuable insights and lessons regarding safe operations, regardless of nationality or geographic location.

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IAOPA Headquarters—421 Aviation Way, Frederick, Maryland 21701, USA.

Tel: +1 301 695 2220, fax +1 301 695 2375. (www.iaopa.org) ruth.moser@aopa.org.

