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# SAFETYWIRES



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## FAA Easing Mental Health Barriers For Pilots

(Source: AOPA.org May, 18 2023; By Lillian Geil )

Federal Air Surgeon Dr. Susan Northrup aims to get pilots who are grounded because of mental health issues back in the air.



FAA Federal Air Surgeon Dr. Susan Northrup participates in a Meet the Administrator session during EAA AirVenture in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, July 29. Photo by David Tulis.

Northrup spoke about the FAA's intentions to ease aeromedical rules for mental health concerns at the Business Aviation Safety Summit on May 9, AIN reported.

She addressed concerns about pilot mental health and discussed upcoming revisions to certification procedures and rules from the FAA that will make it easier for pilots to regain their medical certificates and decrease wait times for pilots grounded for mental health issues.

Additionally, Northrup spoke about the success of the four selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor medications approved for pilot use in 2010 and announced plans to add seven more SSRIs to the approved list.

Northrup, a private pilot and retired U.S. Air Force colonel, has been focused on addressing mental health issues within the FAA since her 2021 appointment as the most senior medical certification official. In 2022, Northrup participated in an AOPA roundtable discussion on pilot mental health at EAA AirVenture Oshkosh, where she said, "Mental health conditions remain high on my list of things we need to address within the FAA," emphasizing her focus on early intervention and the importance of changing the aviation culture around mental health issues.

A 2022 study published in the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine found that 56.1 percent of pilots reported a history of health care avoidant behavior related to fear of losing their aeromedical certificate, and nearly 27 percent indicated misrepresenting or withholding information on their aeromedical screening for the same reason.

Northrup's address at the Business Aviation Safety Summit, organized by the Flight Safety Foundation and National Business Aviation Association and held during Mental Health Awareness Month, also discussed the volume of pilots whose applications have a mental health component, aiming to "dispel the myths" about certification qualification so barriers to treatment can be destroyed, AIN reported.

Currently, 30 to 40 percent of applicants reviewed by the FAA have a mental health component, yet only 0.1 to 0.2 percent are denied certification or recertification.

However, AOPA recognizes the need for the FAA to provide transparent, repeatable, and logical decision paths for applicants to count on when self-identifying mental health issues.

AOPA, NBAA, and several pilot unions including the Air Line Pilots Association, Allied Pilots Association, NetJets Association of Jet Aircraft Pilots, and Southwest Airlines Pilots Association are pursuing legislation to help address needed and long-overdue reforms to the FAA's medical practices and protocols. In the meantime, AOPA strongly supports the need for pilots to get the help they need, and will continue to report on advancements in FAA policies around mental health and provide resources for pilots. In addition, we encourage AOPA members to call our Pilot Information Center at 800-872-2672 for help in addressing these and other issues.

## FAA Establishes Independent Aviation Safety Review Team

(Source: AIN Online; By: Gregory Polek—April 27th, 2023 )



*An independent team established by the FAA of six aviation experts will recommend safety improvements in the nation's air traffic system. (Photo: Josh Beasley from USA, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons)*

The FAA has named an independent safety review team to further examine ways to enhance safety and reliability in the nation's air traffic system. The group of six industry luminaries will present concrete recommendations on how the agency can advance air traffic safety, the FAA said yesterday.

The team consists of former NASA astronaut Charles Bolden Jr.; Tim Canoll, who has served as president of the Air Line Pilots Association, International; Patricia Gilbert, a one-time executive v-p of the National Air Traffic Controllers Association; David Grizzle and Michael Huerta, who formerly were COO and administrator of the FAA, respectively; and Robert Sumwalt, chairman of the NTSB from 2017 to 2021.

"We are committed to maintaining the safest period in U.S. aviation history," said the agency's acting administrator Billy Nolen. "This team will strengthen our ongoing safety efforts and identify specific investments we can make to bolster the National Airspace System."

The announcement of the FAA National Airspace System Safety Review Team follows a safety summit in March where the agency convened officials from across the aviation industry. During the summit, the group concentrated on several recent incidents, many of which occurred during take-offs or landings at busy airports.

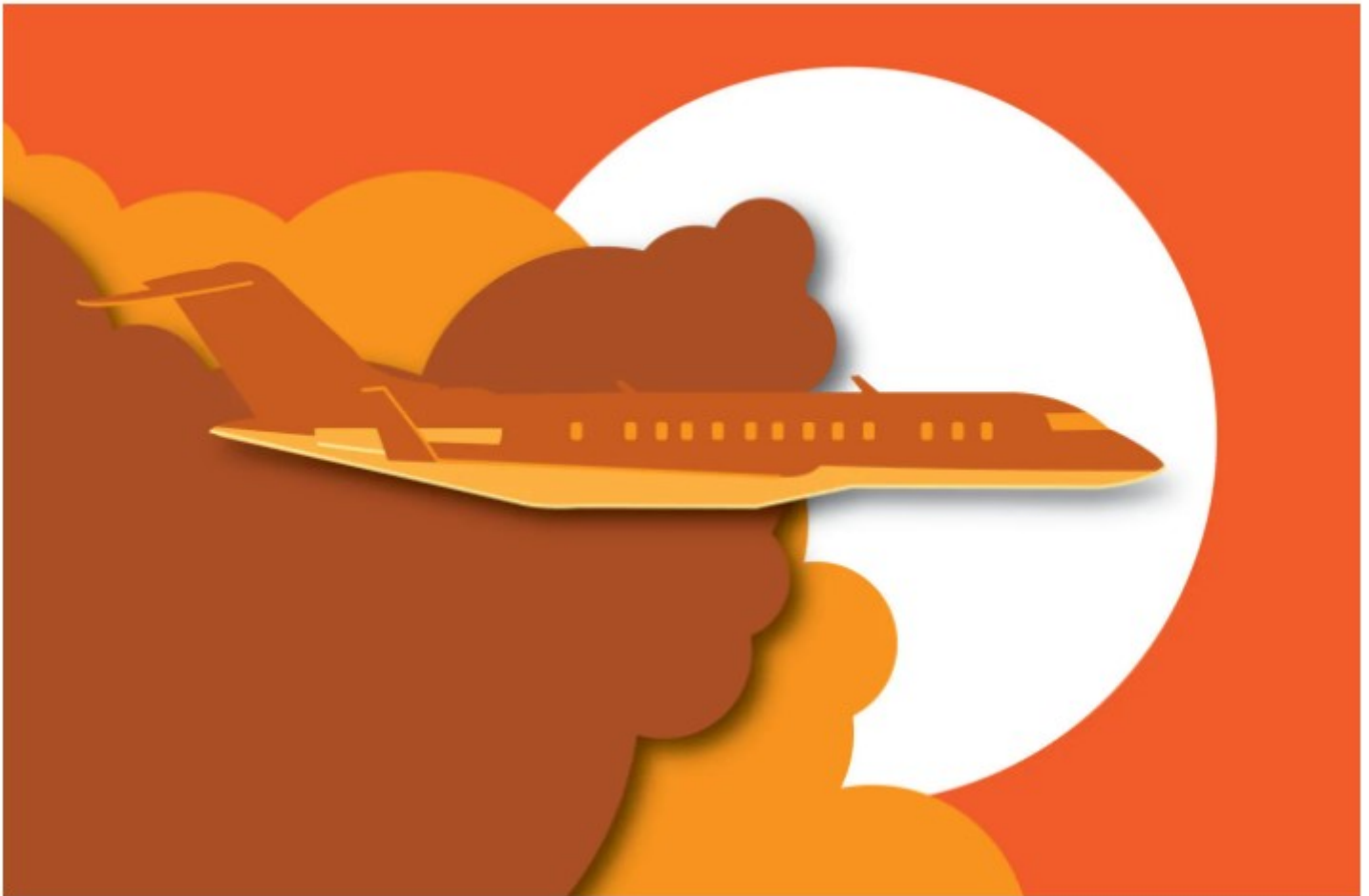
The Safety Review Team will begin its work in May and conclude by October 2023 documenting recommended actions the FAA can take to enhance safety.



## What You Need to Know to Fly Internationally

(Source: NBAA Insider March/April 2023 )

It's important to be aware of changing rules that may impact operators.



Business travel is returning to pre-pandemic levels and experts expect demand for business travel, including international travel, to remain strong in 2023. Here's the latest information that business aircraft operators, flight crews and schedulers need to know about key regions.

## Brazil



Brazil is facing civil unrest in several cities as the country's recent election brought a new president to office. Regional experts say the unrest is not impacting business aircraft operations. However, flight crews and passengers should maintain situational awareness and practice good security while in the country.

"In Brazil, political demonstrations are happening in a decentralized way and are spread across different cities. However, it is not affecting business aviation operations," said Cynthia C.E. de Oliveira, operations director at Lider Aviação.

"The same goes for the other countries in South America. There are no reports of difficulties in accessing airports or stoppages related to general aviation," said de Oliveira.

Foreign aircraft flying into Brazil or any South American country should still use an experienced third-party handler. Each country's entry requirements are different, and some documents can only be completed in the native language of the destination company, de Oliveira explained.

"These professionals will have information on the impacts on the operation due to events in real time," she added.

"It is always important to request in advance to your service provider all the recommendations for safe and smooth travel," added de Oliveira, especially when considering paperwork, authorizations, vaccinations, visas, overflight permits, required licenses and local issues that can interfere with operations.

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"It's always important to request in advance to your service provider all the recommendations for safe and smooth travel. "

**CYNTHIA C.E. DE OLIVEIRA** *Operations Director, Lider Aviação*

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## China

China's COVID-19 response, which was one of the harshest in the world, has relaxed in the past few months, allowing international travelers back into the country. Experts say changes implemented just this year mean requirements are now reduced to almost pre-pandemic levels.



Passengers and any crewmembers planning to stay overnight in China must have a negative PCR test within 48 hours of arrival. Each person entering and exiting the country must complete an Exit/Entry Health Declaration Form. U.S. crewmembers must hold a valid crew visa, and normal visa requirements apply for all passengers.

Foreign aircraft are limited to six legs in mainland China, after which the aircraft must reposition to a third country before returning.

"China's COVID response is a somewhat fluid situation," said Doug Carr, NBAA's senior vice president, safety, security, sustainability and international operations. "Failure to comply with entry testing or concealing information on the Exit/Entry Health Declaration Form can result in additional testing or quarantine, fines or even arrest and detention, so it's critical to verify current requirements with an experienced handler while trip planning and complete the health form accurately."

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"Although the programs haven't launched yet, NBAA encourages operators that qualify as a 'carrier' and travel to Europe to register for the new eu-LISA programs now."

**BRIAN KOESTER** CAM, NBAA Director, Flight Operations & Regulations

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## Europe



The 27 countries that now make up the Schengen Area in Europe are launching two new passenger-entry programs. Certain operators will be required to query the new Entry/Exit System (EES) and European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) to verify details regarding trips in an effort to identify potential risks and security concerns, including serious crimes and terrorism and general visa compliance. These programs fall under the European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, or eu-LISA.

A “carrier” is defined as any natural or legal person whose profession it is to provide transport of persons, according to Schengen Border Code article 2.15, although there are still some questions about the applicability of the term “carrier.”

“Although the programs haven’t launched yet, NBAA encourages operators that qualify as a ‘carrier’ and travel to Europe to register for the new eu-LISA programs now,” said Brian Koester, CAM, NBAA’s director, flight operations and regulations. “The registration process is not difficult but does take some time.”

[See this edition’s Regulatory Hot Topics column for more details.](#)

## Mexico

The Federal Civil Aviation Agency (AFAC) of Mexico (previously the Directorate General of Civil Aeronautics [DGAC]) increased random ramp inspections of foreign aircraft visiting Mexico and arriving to a list of specific airports from Dec. 20, 2022 through Jan. 20, 2023. Although that focused increase in ramp inspections has passed, Part 91 and Part 135 operators conducting flights to Mexico are still encouraged to be prepared for ramp inspections.



Many of the requirements align with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) recommendations and should be familiar to most pilots. However, a few key additional documents are required for foreign aircraft flights to Mexico.



For example, Part 91 operators must present a document stating the purpose of the flight, including the name of the lead passenger, and declare the passenger's connection with the aircraft (owner, employee, etc.). If accompanied by other passengers, the letter must declare the relationship of the passengers with the lead passenger (family, friends, employees, etc.), said Emilio Padilla Escoto, operations control center manager for Manny in Mexico.

"While there is no formal list of requirements to be presented at the time of inspection, those mentioned in the sidebar (see below) are highly recommended. It is very important to be clear that AFAC has not been specific about the aircraft/pilot requirements, so it falls on the criteria of each inspector. They might ask for more or fewer documents than listed here," Escoto explained.

Failure to comply with any of these requirements can result in a warning or fine per Mexican Civil Aviation Law.



## MEXICO DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

**Before departing for a trip to Mexico, Manny recommends verifying the following are onboard:**

- ✓ Airworthiness certificate
- ✓ Registration certificate
- ✓ Worldwide and/or Mexican insurance (certificates must indicate whether private or charter operations are covered – Part 135 must have both worldwide and Mexican insurance)
- ✓ Airman certificate(s)
- ✓ Airman medical certificate(s), appropriate type of flight and pilot's age
- ✓ Multiple Entry Authorization, if appropriate, plus payment receipt and crew and passenger lists

## MEXICO COMMERCIAL CHECKLIST



**For commercial operations, in addition to the items above, verify the following are onboard:**

- ✓ Valid Air Operator Certificate (AOC): Copies are acceptable.
- ✓ FAA OST 4507 Form. Copies are acceptable. Alternatively, the appropriate exemption document, Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity, is also acceptable.
- ✓ If you hold a Mexican Indefinite Blanket Permit (IBP), it should be accompanied by the Mexican AOC and the yearly verification (including payment receipt). Copies are acceptable.
- ✓ Maintenance log. Copies of last page or latest entries are acceptable – originals are not necessary.
- ✓ Aircraft radio station license/authorization
- ✓ Aircraft flight manual
- ✓ Noise certificate
- ✓ Minimum equipment list, if applicable
- ✓ Mexican Aeronautical Information Publication
- ✓ Preflight checklists
- ✓ Weight and balance manifest
- ✓ First aid kit
- ✓ Life raft and/or life jacket, if required by routing
- ✓ Charts appropriate to flight (paper or electronic)

## Russia/Ukraine



Steve Thorpe, an international captain for a Gulfstream operator and former chair of NBAA's International Operators Committee, shared the impact of air-space closures over Russia and Ukraine. Affected routes include between the U.S. and India, between Europe and Japan, and Europe and South Korea.

Flight crews should plan their routing with extreme care. For example, some routes require exceptionally high minimum enroute altitudes to avoid closed airspace.

Consider your own organization's tolerance for risk when planning a trip that could be affected by airspace closures.

Business aircraft operators should also consider where they are comfortable landing in the event of an emergency diversion, whether due to a mechanical issue with the aircraft or a medical emergency. Even polar routes, which might seem like a safe option, are questionable, as many used to rely on Russian airports for diversion locations.



During an emergency, the nationality of passengers or ownership of the company might impact your organization's comfort level or willingness to land in a particular country. Asset protection must be considered as well. Are there countries you'd rather not have your business aircraft sitting in while customs and other issues resulting from an unexpected arrival are sorted out?

"Different companies have different tolerances for risk," said Thorpe, who recommends the following best practices:

Even if Extended Twin Engine Operations (ETOPS) limitations aren't applicable to your operation, many operations comply with ETOPS as a best practice.

"Basically, consider any place you don't want to land – such as an ocean – only if you're on fire. Otherwise, determine equal time points and use them," Thorpe said.

Also, consider partnering with a third-party medical vendor. If you have a medical emergency in the air, do you know where you'd want to land? Some countries have much better medical facilities with similar flight times. An expert in this area could help save a life.

[Review NBAA's international flying resources at nbaa.org/intl.](https://nbaa.org/intl)



# SAFETY MANAGER'S CORNER

## Mental health awareness is key:

### Pilot Mental Fitness

#### Pilot Medical Certifications and How Mental Health is Assessed

- The FAA's [regulations](#) require airline pilots to undergo a medical exam with an Aviation Medical Examiner (AME) every six months to five years, depending on the type of flying they do and their age.
- Aviation Medical Examiners are trained to determine the pilot's mental health and fitness to fly.
  - Before this medical exam, pilots are required to report any health professional visits during the previous three years, all medications being taken, and other medical history on their medical application form. This form includes questions about mental health.
  - During this examination, pilots must disclose all existing physical and psychological conditions and medications.
- Based on the answers on the form and the examination, an AME may ask further questions about mental health conditions or symptoms.
- The AME can request additional psychological testing, or defer the application to the Office of Aerospace Medicine if he or she is concerned that further evaluation is necessary.

#### Additional FAA Oversight

- If the FAA receives information from another source that a pilot may have a mental health condition, the Office of Aerospace Medicine can direct the pilot to provide specific documentation and/or a psychiatric and psychological evaluation from a mental health care professional, in order to make a determination about the pilot's suitability for certification.
- If a pilot experiences an incident that appears medically related, the FAA will request additional medical information.
- In 2016, the [Pilot Fitness Aviation Rulemaking Committee](#) (ARC) provided several recommendations to the FAA about pilot medical fitness. The ARC was established to evaluate pilot mental health, after the German Wings 9525 incident. The FAA has acted on several of those recommendations, including:
  - Expand training in mental health issues provided to AMEs in the AME Basic and Refresher seminars. The FAA has done this.
  - Encourage Pilot Peer Support programs organized by airlines and unions. The FAA has done this and also provides additional mental health training to peer support volunteers.

#### How the FAA is Reducing the Stigma of Mental Health, Help Pilots Receive Care

- The FAA encourages pilots to seek help if they have a mental health condition since most, if treated, do not disqualify a pilot from flying.
  - However, certain medical conditions such as a psychosis, bipolar disorder and some types of personality disorder automatically disqualify a pilot from obtaining an FAA medical certificate.
  - Former FAA Administrator Steve Dickson addressed pilot mental health at the University of North Dakota [Mental Health Summit](#).
- During the last several years, the FAA has invested resources to eliminate the stigma around mental health in the aviation community so pilots seek treatment. This includes:
  - Increased mental health training for medical examiners
  - Supported industry-wide research and clinical studies on pilot mental health
  - Hired additional mental health professionals to expand in-house expertise and to decrease wait times for return-to-fly decisions
  - Initiated clinical research to address the frequency of cognitive testing in airmen on antidepressant medication
- The FAA developed a plan to support individuals on special issuance for substance dependence. The plan allows the agency to provide long-term support for pilots in recovery.

**The FAA has produced this short video located here in order to better explain the issue.**

[Pilots Minute Video](#)

# Quote of the Month

**You were warned what defeat would bring. I will tolerate your weakness no longer.”**



— Darth Vader

This, in the strongest tone possible, is what safety management is about. We find the weakness, and then we announce to everyone we won't tolerate it. Then, we fix it. Welcome to the dark side. Do not underestimate the power.....of the Dark Side.

## On Short Final...

### CHICKEN WINGS®

BY MICHAEL AND STEFAN STRASSER





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## UPCOMING COURSES

Aug 21 to Aug 25, 2023—PROS Course  
**Aviation Lead Auditor Training (ALAT)**  
Denver, CO

Sept 26 to Sept 28, 2023—PRISM Course  
**Safety Management System (SMS)**  
Denver, CO

Oct 30 to Nov 3, 2023—PROS Course  
**Aviation Lead Auditor Training (ALAT)**  
Denver, CO

Go to [Upcoming Training Classes](#) to register.

