

FAA CHANGES NIGHT CURRENCY REQUIREMENTS

May 3, 1999

What's at Issue

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has amended Part 61 night currency requirements for pilots of aircraft with a type rating requirement.

Why It's Important

This rule change alters how pilots can meet the requirements of 61.57 "Recent flight experience: Pilot in command" for night flights. Under this change, a pilot that meets the night currency requirement in one type of airplane can maintain currency for all airplanes operated by the pilot.

Major Provisions

During the rewrite of Part 61 "Certification: Pilots, Flight Instructors, and Ground Instructors" (effective 1997), the FAA changed 61.57 to require night currency in aircraft category, class and type. Previously, only category and class experience was necessary to maintain currency. Without this change, a pilot would have to meet night currency requirements in each airplane operated.

In a direct final rule, the FAA has added a new paragraph, 61.57 (e) (3), which allows an alternate means of maintaining night currency in multiple aircraft that are type certificated for more than one pilot.

Under the new 61.57 (e) (3), a pilot-in-command can maintain night currency in more than one type airplane if the following requirements are met.

1. Hold a valid commercial pilot certificate with appropriate type ratings for each aircraft the pilot wishes to operate under this alternative,
2. At least 1500 hours total time as a pilot,
3. At least 15 hours of flight time in the last 90 days in each type of airplane the pilot seeks to operate under this alternative,
4. a) 3 full stop takeoffs and landings within 90 days during the period 1 hour after sunset to 1 hour before sunrise in at least one of the types of airplanes the pilot seeks to operate under the alternative, or
b) Completion of a Part 142-approved training program within the preceding 12 months that includes 6 takeoffs and 6 landings to a full stop in a simulator that is representative of one of the types of airplanes the pilot seeks to operate and with visuals set to represent the 1 hour after sunset/1 hour before sunrise period.

NATA Position

NATA encourages any impacted members to familiarize themselves with the changes as soon as possible. Although this represents a change for many Part 91 operators, Part 135 night currency requirements remain unchanged in the regulation.

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Status

The rule change, published on April 30, 1999, in the Federal Register, became effective immediately.

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