

Regulatory and Certification Policy

Regulatory Briefing: FAA's Final Rule for Re-Registration and Renewal of Aircraft Registration

The issue

On July 20, 2010 the FAA issued a Final Rule for Re-Registration and Renewal of Aircraft Registration. This final rule amends the FAA's regulations concerning aircraft registration. Over a 3-year period, this rule will terminate the registration of all aircraft registered before October 1, 2010, and will require the re-registration of each aircraft to retain U.S. civil aircraft status. These amendments also establish a system for a 3-year recurrent expiration and renewal of registration for all aircraft issued registration certificates on or after October 1, 2010. This final rule amends the FAA's regulations to provide standards for the timely cancellation of registration numbers (N-numbers) for unregistered aircraft. These amendments will improve the accuracy of the Civil Aviation Registry database and will ensure that aircraft owners provide information to maintain accurate registration records. These amendments respond to the concerns of law enforcement and other government agencies to provide more accurate, up-to-date aircraft registration information.

Background

In an effort to create a more accurate aircraft registration database, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is requiring re-registration of all civil aircraft over the next three years and renewal every three years after that. The FAA estimates that approximately one-third of the 357,000 registered aircraft records it maintains are inaccurate and that many aircraft associated with those records are likely ineligible for United States registration. The inaccuracies result from failures in the voluntary compliance based system. Although aircraft owners are required to report the sale of an aircraft, death of an owner, scrapping or destruction of an aircraft, and changes in mailing address; many have not. Without owner initiated action, there has been no means to correct those records. The FAA has been asked by government and law enforcement agencies to provide more accurate and up-to-date aircraft registration information. This rule is intended to support the needs of our system users. Re-registration of all U.S. civil aircraft by Dec. 31, 2013 will enhance the database with current data derived from recent contact with aircraft owners. The new regulations also will ensure that aircraft owners give the FAA fresh information at least once every three years when they renew their registration. The FAA will cancel the N-numbers of aircraft that are not re-registered or renewed.

Re-registration and Registration for Existing Aircraft

If your certificate was issued in this month (of any year)	Certificate expires	Re-registration required
March	March 31, 2011	Nov. 1, 2010, to Jan. 31, 2011

April	June 30, 2011	Feb. 1 to April 30, 2011
May	Sept. 30, 2011	May 1 to July 31, 2011
June	Dec. 31, 2011	Aug. 1 to Oct. 31, 2011
July	March 31, 2012	Nov. 1, 2011, to Jan. 31, 2012
August	June 30, 2012	Feb. 1 to April 30, 2012
September	Sept. 30, 2012	May 1 to July 31, 2012
October	Dec. 31, 2012	Aug. 1 to Oct. 31, 2012
November	March 31, 2013	Nov. 1, 2012, to Jan. 31, 2013
December	June 30, 2013	Feb. 1 to April 30, 2013
January	Sept. 30, 2013	May 1 to July 31, 2013
February	Dec. 31, 2013	Aug. 1 to Oct. 31, 2013

AOPA's position

AOPA is disappointed in the FAA's decision to move forward with the expiring registration format in the final rule. AOPA had put forward in our comments a model that would have allowed the FAA a method to achieve the same goals without the expense of reissuing aircraft registrations. While AOPA supports bringing the aircraft registry up to date, we are concerned that the method put forward by the FAA in this final rule is a considerable undertaking which could lead to significant issues for aircraft owners. In our comments to the NPRM, AOPA highlighted the need for flexibility in the timing of re-registrations and the need to include incentives such as longer renewal cycles for controlling the timing of aircraft registrations instead of mandating a rigid schedule. The final rule includes neither. AOPA has been and will continue to be in direct communications with the Registry Management highlighting our concerns and addressing issues as they arise.

The rule does leverage an online system for aircraft re-registration and renewal that AOPA proposed in its comments.

Key Points:

- FAA final rule becomes effective October 1, 2010
- Over 3 year period, rule will terminate the registration of all aircraft registered before October 1, 2010
- All existing aircraft will need to re-register over next 3 years and renew every 3 years thereafter
- FAA providing 3 month window for existing registered aircraft to be re-registered based upon month aircraft was originally registered (see chart below)
- FAA will notify owner via mail, 180 days prior to expiration date and at the end of the re-registration window if not re-registered

