

KNOW THE LAW

by JOHN D. RYAN, Chairman

SSA Governmental Rules and Regulations Committee

As all pilots are required to be familiar with current regulations covering their operations, the SSA Governmental Rules and Regulations Committee feels that a review of selected regulations might be worthwhile. From time to time *Soaring* will present a recap or analysis of pertinent FAA rules in order that our members can rebrief themselves.

In an attempt to keep this reasonably short, only *parts* of the regulations applying to soaring will be mentioned—please don't consider this to be a complete review of everything in the book. Also, please understand that even those regulations which principally apply to soaring will *not be completely* covered in these reviews.

For those who would like to have the current rules and regulations available it is suggested that they subscribe to the service provided by FAA and the Government Printing Office. Write FAA, Publications Branch, Washington 25, D.C. and ask for their current status sheet covering FAA rules and regulations. You can then select those parts which you would like to have available and order them from the Superintendent of Documents at a very nominal cost. When the regulations are received a notice form will be enclosed which, when filled out and returned, will place you on the mailing list for all future revisions as they are published. This makes a current copy of the regulations readily available to anyone.

Now to get on with a look at

some of the current rules. We will cover air traffic control first, and before getting into the details a few definitions are in order:

CONTROLLED AIRSPACE—Airspace of defined dimensions designated by the Administrator as continental control area, control area, control zone or transition area, within which air traffic control is exercised.

CONTINENTAL CONTROL AREA—The continental control area consists of the airspace of the continental United States at and above 14,500 feet MSL, but excludes (1) the state of Alaska, (2) the airspace less than 1500 feet above terrain, and (3) prohibited and restricted areas, except those restricted areas specified in Part 601 of the Regulations of the Administrator.

CONTROL AREA—Unless otherwise provided in appropriate cases, control areas extend upward from 700 feet above the surface (until some time in the near future when it will be designated as from 1200 feet above the surface) or from at least 500 feet below the MEA (Mean En route Altitude), whichever is higher, to the base of the continental control area.

CONTROL ZONE—Control zones extend upward from the surface. A control zone may include one or more airports and is normally a circular area of 5 statute miles in radius with extensions where necessary to include instrument approach and departure paths.

Under visual flight rule (VFR) procedures aircraft must be flown in weather conditions equal to or better than:

1. WITHIN CONTROL ZONES —

A. Unless a clearance has been obtained from air traffic control, aircraft shall not be flown beneath the ceiling when the ceiling is less than 1,000', or closer than 500' vertically under, 1,000' vertically over, and 2,000' horizontally from any cloud formation.

B. Unless a clearance has been ob-

tained from air traffic control, a pilot shall not take-off or land an aircraft at an airport within a control zone or enter a traffic pattern of such an airport when the ground visibility is less than 3 miles.

2. **WITHIN CONTROL AND TRANSITION AREAS**—Visibility 3 miles, 500 feet vertically under, 1,000 feet vertically over, and 2,000 feet horizontally from any cloud formation.

3. **WITHIN CONTINENTAL CONTROL AREA**—Visibility 5 miles, 1,000 feet vertically and one mile horizontally from any cloud formation.

4. **OUTSIDE CONTROLLED AIRSPACE**—Visibility at least one mile. Above 1,200 feet above the surface, 500 feet vertically under, 1,000 feet vertically over, and 2,000 feet horizontally from any cloud formation. At 2,000 feet or less above the surface, clear of clouds.

Aircraft may be operated in accordance with the visual flight rules above a well-defined cloud or other formation provided climb to and descent from such "on top" flight can also be made in accordance with VFR weather minimums.

These are the basic rules governing soaring flight below 24,000 feet. Above this altitude something different is in effect, and is covered under Special Civil Air Regulation SR-424C. This regulation says that: 1, No person shall operate an aircraft within this area without prior approval of air traffic control. 2, All VFR flight activities included VFR on top irrespective of weather conditions, are prohibited from operating in this designated airspace. SR-424C further states that all aircraft shall have instruments and equipment for IFR operations and the pilot rated for instrument flight, be equipped with a coded radar beacon transponder, and also carry radio equipment capable of providing direct pilot-controller communications on the frequencies specified by air traffic control.

In addition to the above, SR-424C further states that flight in certain airspace between the altitudes of 17,000 and 24,000 feet, called positive control route segments, must comply with the above provisions with the exception of the transponder and pilot-controller communications requirements.

Lets see what all this means to the sailplane pilot: Below 14,500 feet, in uncontrolled airspace, we can fly under the 1-mile visibility provision if we remain 500 feet under, 1,000 feet over and 2,000 feet horizontally from all clouds. When flying below 14,500 feet in controlled airspace (control areas, control zones, transition areas, and designated airways) 3-mile visibility is required and the same separation from clouds applies. When fly-

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