

End of Towing Waivers in Sight

The Federal Aviation Agency issued Notice 66-23 (Docket No. 7435) on June 16, 1966, containing proposed new Federal Aviation Regulations on Glider Towing Operations. Comment on this notice will be received until September 14, 1966, by FAA Flight Standards Service.

At Reno the SSA Board of Directors reviewed the proposal and agreed upon the following final recommendations. Of course, this does not foreclose comment by individuals, but the frank hope of the Board is that the official input will meet with general membership approval.

This proposal by FAA resembles very closely an informal but detailed suggestion submitted through SSA President John D. Ryan in his liaison role with FAA on regulatory matters.

The FAA proposal sets both check-out requirements for tow pilots and safety standards for the towing operation. If these requirements are met, no prior waiver is required.

The tow pilot must have a private pilot rating, or better, and have 200 hours of total flight time. He must have instruction in towing techniques and safety procedures—certified in his log book by a glider instructor. He must have a three-flight checkout as tow pilot, accompanied by a previously qualified tow pilot with over 10 tows. If these are *simulated* tows, the would-be tow pilot must also have three glider flights as pilot or observer—all certified in his log by the check pilots.

Operating standards would require a qualified tow pilot and an approved tow hitch on the aircraft. The tow line or the safety link at the glider end must have a breaking strength between 80 and 200 percent of the gross weight of the gliders. If the tow line itself does not meet this standard a safety link must be installed also at the tow-plane end which is 25 percent stronger than the safety link at the glider end but not over 200 percent of the glider gross weight.

Towing within a control zone would require advance notice by the tow pilot. There must be advance agreement by tow pilot and glider pilot on take off and release signals and emergency procedures

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for both. There must be no intentional release of the tow line so as to endanger life or property.

SSA COMMENT FORWARDED

The principal recommendation by SSA is to continue to permit well-qualified, named pilots, with something less than 200 hours, to tow under waivers issued, as at present, by district FAA offices. Minor recommendations to clarify "intentional release of the *empty* towline" and logbook entries by *named* check pilots have also been proposed.

ON THE TOW RELEASE FRONT

FAA has recently asked SSA to suggest appropriate standards for approval of tow releases on tow planes, to be issued as an Advisory Circular. A draft reply has been circulated for comment through the Technical Committee. A final draft reply will be sent through President Ryan soon.

This second collaboration between FAA and SSA will also be helpful in simplifying soaring-group relations with FAA.

New Multiplace Record

On July 9, 1966, Mr. Edward G. Minghelli of Palmdale, California, made a soaring flight of 403 miles for which a new multiplace distance record is being claimed. The flight originated at El Mirage Field, near Adelanto, California, and terminated nine hours and four minutes later, at a point 25 miles south of Carlin, Nevada. There were difficulties during the first 130 miles of the flight, and several points at which a premature landing seemed inevitable. Once the White Mountains were reached, however, there was plentiful lift and strong following winds. The sailplane was a Prue Two.

Documentation for the flight must be approved by the Soaring Society of America and by the National Aeronautic Association before the present national multiplace distance record of 309.678 miles, set by Richard H. Johnson in 1946 in a Schweizer TG-2 sailplane, can be replaced in the record books. The world record for this category is 515.626 miles, held by Russia.