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**Surviving An FAA Ramp Check**

**By Greg Reigel**

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**SURVIVING AN FAA RAMP CHECK**

by Gregory J. Reigel

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You are standing on the ramp performing a pre-flight inspection. A man who you have never seen before approaches you and starts chatting about the weather and asking you questions: "What's your name?", "Where are you going?" etc. How do you respond?

First, know who you are talking to. Ask for the person's name. Find out what he or she is doing there. In this post 9/11 era, knowing who is at the airport and what they are doing is good practice and prevention. This is the premise of AOPA's GA Secure program. Second, if the person is an FAA inspector, you want to find that out as soon as possible. If he or she is, ask to see his or her FAA Identification card.

During the course of a ramp check, the FAA inspector will ask to inspect/review a number of items. Some of those items and how you produce them for the FAA inspector are discussed below. Quite a bit of this is common sense. Much of it is information all pilots learned, or should have learned, when they learned how to fly.

**Personal Documents**

When you fly an aircraft, you must have certain personal documents in your possession. You must have your airman certificate and it must be appropriate to the aircraft and type of flying you are doing. You must also have your medical certificate. It must be the original certificate issued by your Airman Medical Examiner and it must also be current and appropriate to the type of flying you are doing. Finally, in the aftermath of 9/11, you must also have in your possession a drivers license or other

government issued ID containing your photograph.

### **Logbook**

Next, the inspector may ask to see your flight logbook. I advise pilots not to bring their logbook with them when they are flying. Why? Two reasons: One, if you bring your logbook with you and it is destroyed if you are in an accident, you won't have any documentation to prove your flight time and currency. This can raise potentially ugly issues not only with the FAA, but also with your insurance company if they question your currency at the time of the accident and deny coverage. To avoid the insurance coverage issue, if you must bring your logbook with you I suggest you keep a photocopy of your logbook at home or in some other safe place.

Second, if you have your logbook with you and the inspector asks to review it, you will have to provide the entire logbook. Rather than allowing the inspector to review more logbook entries than are necessary or pertinent at the time of the ramp check, I prefer having the opportunity after the ramp check to simply photocopy the pages documenting your currency and then providing them to the inspector.

### **Aircraft Documents In The Aircraft**

Similar to the requirement that you have certain personal documents in your possession, the aircraft you fly also needs to contain certain documents. The inspector may want to review the aircraft documents during the ramp check. However, an inspector cannot inspect the interior of your aircraft without consent. Consequently, rather than giving consent, I recommend that you personally remove the requested documents from the aircraft and give them to the inspector.

You may need to supply the aircraft's registration certificate. Make sure the N-number on the certificate matches the N-number on the aircraft. Also, if you are operating with a temporary certificate, remember that it is only valid for 120 days. The aircraft's airworthiness certificate will likely be inspected as well. Here again, make sure the N-number on the certificate matches the N-number on the aircraft data plate.

Additional aircraft documents that are fair game during a ramp check include the operator/flight manual, or operating limitations if the aircraft is a homebuilt aircraft, and the aircraft's weight and balance information. For certificated aircraft, the weight and balance information should be in the manual. For homebuilt aircraft, this information will be contained in the aircraft's operating limitations.

### **Charts**

Since a pilot is required to be familiar with all available information for each flight, an inspector may also ask to see the aeronautical charts you intend to use on your flight. Make sure the charts you have in the aircraft or your flight bag are current and appropriate to your flight. This seems like a "no-brainer", but you would be surprised how many pilots are flying with sectional charts that are several years old or instrument approach plates that are more than 56 days old. From a compliance

perspective and, more importantly, from a safety perspective, use current and appropriate charts.

### **Interacting With The Inspector**

During the course of the ramp check, you can also take the initiative and ask the inspector questions. Ask the inspector why he or she suspects you and what information the inspector has that leads to his or her suspicion. You can also ask the inspector which FAR's you are suspected of violating.

If the answers to these questions indicates that a simple misunderstanding is present, you can certainly try to clarify the situation for the inspector. However, if it appears that the inspector's issues are more than a simple misunderstanding or if you do not receive adequate responses to your questions, do not volunteer any information to the inspector. Remain polite and respectful, but don't give the inspector any more information than is required.

Do not try to argue with the inspector. Very rarely will you win an argument with the inspector. On the contrary, an argument with the inspector will usually get you in deeper trouble. You will either provide the inspector with information that helps the inspector make his or her case against you or you will exhibit a "poor compliance attitude", or both. Don't do it. Discretion and respect will serve you better.

Most pilots will never find themselves in a ramp check, due to the minimal manpower the FAA has available for ramp checks. However, if you find yourself in a ramp check, it is survivable. Hopefully this information, along with the right attitude, will get you through it. As always, fly safe and fly smart.

### **Wheel Chair Ramp**

**By Armen Hareyan**

Some people order from various companies when in need of Wheel Chair Ramp. Others just try to build their own wheelchair ramp, thus trying to save some money or for variety of reasons. In any case you want your Wheelchair Ramp to be the best it can to suite your needs.

Here are few questions that you can ask yourself before you either build or order a Wheel Chair Ramp from a company.

What weight capacity am I looking for this Wheel Chair Ramp to be? Is this going to be good for doorway thresholds and raised landings? One probably would like the Wheel Chair Ramp to have a 600lbs. weight capacity because Electric Wheel Chairs can be very heavy.

Do you need one that bridges gaps over steps, curbs and raised landings? Perhaps you can ask the company if they have the ramps available in different sizes for your various needs.

Is the new Wheelchair Ramp going to be sturdy and dependable? For the smaller Ramps a good question is are they lightweight and can be transported without much efforts?

Some Wheel Chair Ramps are not for the house use only, but are built to enable access to vans or

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other kinds of transportation. Therefore, a question that rises here is are these rams convenient to store and set up? Is the length adjustable?

It is important that the Wheel Chair Ramp may provide a solid and safe driving surface for any kinds of wheelchairs: electric or manual. Ramps should have a 5' straight and level surface at the bottom to allow adequate stopping distance.

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Armen Hareyan is the Publisher of

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Wheel Chair Ramp

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