

FAA Certification

ACCELERATING INNOVATION IN CIVIL AVIATION



FAA CERTIFICATION

The FAA certification process ensures that aircraft and related products and services meet its set of minimum safety standards and regulatory requirements. The process supports the creation of bilateral certification agreements with other countries so that U.S.-manufactured aircraft can be certified to those countries' standards and be exported. Similarly, the FAA also manages the certification validation of products designed and manufactured in other countries when they are imported to U.S. customers.

Currently, the FAA is too often locked into bureaucratic regulatory processes that can discourage innovation and the introduction of new safety-enhancing technologies. Additionally, these processes often rely on transactional FAA involvement for approval of each project or product, which means that companies are competing for scarce FAA resources to bring their products to the market. Moreover, when a product is exported to a new country or imported from another country to the United States the FAA must also support its validation with that country's aviation regulatory authority.

CERTIFICATION REFORM

In September 2018, Congress passed the five-year Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act that directed the agency to update the aircraft certification process to continuously enhance aviation safety, as well as the ability of U.S. companies to compete in the global market. Congress enacted further reforms with the passage of aircraft certification, safety, and accountability legislation as part of the Fiscal Year 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act. The direction of Congress included driving changes to the certification activities within the FAA, facilitating the introduction of new safety innovations and technologies into the market, and demanding more aggressive engagement by the FAA in supporting validation of U.S. exports into foreign markets through bilateral agreements. In response, the FAA has initiated improvements aimed at refreshing the certification strategy, investing in management systems to improve the certification process, developing more robust methods to incorporate new technology including a focus on automation and the human/machine interface, and improving the certification organization with investments in and empowerment of staff to accomplish the mission.

We are at an exciting time in the aerospace industry – commercial aviation, unmanned and autonomous systems, commercial space, and supersonic transportation are all growing at an unprecedented pace. Specifically, the aerospace industry is growing at a significantly higher rate than FAA resources, and without the changes to the system that the FAA has initiated, the FAA will not be able to safely facilitate introducing new products and technologies into the airspace.

WHAT'S NEXT

The FAA continues to implement the reforms directed by the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 and the Fiscal Year 2020 Consolidated Appropriations Act. These reforms will ensure the United States remains a leader in aviation safety and competitive in the global aviation marketplace. The agency will continue to promote the U.S. aerospace industry throughout the world and offer an improved model for how certification can be achieved.



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