

# Current Events

By Mike Jesch

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No, not the newsy sort of current events! This month, I thought I'd talk a bit about pilot currency. And no, not the currency that you used to fill the fuel tank after your last flight, either! We'll talk proficiency another time, but over the years I've had a few clients who were unaware of their state of legal pilot currency, and in several of these cases, they had been flying, with passengers, in this not legal status. Nobody is going to catch you until something happens, of course, but when that something happens, one of the things you'll be asked is to show the investigators how you were legal to be operating that flight.

Before we get into it, go grab your pilot logbook and check to see if you're current in all respects: Flight Review (or its equivalent) in the last 24 months; three takeoffs and landings in category and class in the last 90 days to carry passengers; full stop landings if at night or in a tailwheel airplane; instrument approaches (six of them), intercepting and tracking courses, and holding procedures in the last six months if the flight is to be under IFR. Go ahead and check right now, I'll wait.

Good! You're ahead of the curve! But, do you have both takeoffs AND landings logged? Most logbooks only have a column for landings. It should be obvious to even the most casual observer that you can't land without taking off, but what about that time you bounced before you landed? That'd be two landings for one takeoff!

Do you really have intercepting courses logged? Many pilots think it's enough to log an approach, because you couldn't fly an approach without intercepting and tracking, but I figure the regulation wouldn't say it unless you were expected to do it, so I just log it.

Unfortunately, most pilots still use the Flight Review for their currency. Formerly known as the BFR, or Biennial Flight Review - and sometimes incorrectly referred to as a Biannual, which means twice per year - the B fell off the definition years ago and it's now called simply a Flight Review. I say unfortunately because, in my opinion, that level of exposure to a Flight Instructor is wholly inadequate to be proficient. Still, the worst thing is that even if that's the only training you do, you have to remember when you have to do it again. It's not your instructor's job to keep you current - that's your job as a pilot. A good Instructor would keep this in mind and call when it's time, but how am I to know whether you did it with another Instructor?

What if you're one of the hip and modern pilots who uses the Wings Pilot Proficiency Program to maintain your currency? Congratulations! You're way ahead of the curve! Data shows that those who participate in this program, or even just do a bunch of classes at the Air Safety Institute, have a better accident record than those who simply do Flight Reviews. But how do you demonstrate that you're current? You don't get a logbook endorsement that

you're current, so how? The answer is that you can go to the [faasafety.gov](http://faasafety.gov) web site and review your status, and even print out a certificate that you can slip in your logbook or wallet if you feel the need.

Unless you're a student pilot, or sport or recreational, you don't need to carry your log book with you. In fact, it is suggested that you don't. Some pilots do, and joke that they don't want to leave any evidence behind when they go down in a ball of flames. That just means there'll be a sentence in the final accident report that they "were unable to determine whether the pilot was current". If you end up under investigation for something, though, you'd better be able to prove that you are current, or you'll end up with another violation in addition to whatever else you did wrong.

After completing a flight with a client a while back, I asked him for his logbook so that I could log the instruction I had just given him. Imagine my surprise when he told me he didn't keep one! It's not mandatory to log every flight, but you do have to log enough to prove you're current and legal.

Fly Safe! Fly More! Have Fun!

Mike Jesch  
ATP, Master CFI  
2016 LGB District FAAS Team Rep Of The Year