

360° OVERHEAD APPROACHES AND LOW APPROACHES

FAA Field Offices recently received the letter shown here, according to the EAA. The EAA suggests, and we endorse, that you may want to carry the letter with you, along with the "small N- number" documents many of you already carry. There may still be out there an FAA representative who is not current on this regulation.

Also from the EAA, we have reproduced the appropriate FAA rule interpretation. They urge that you read the entire rule, but highlight the following sentence from paragraph B:

This request should be made PRIOR TO STARTING THE FINAL APPROACH.

Says the EAA, "Nobody likes a surprise, least of all a controller or a pilot. Announcing on short final that you are executing a low approach or a 360° overhead approach may not sit well with the tower."

Wallace Athey

232. LOW APPROACH

a. A low approach (sometimes referred to as a low pass) is the go-around maneuver following an approach. Instead of landing or making a touch-and-go, a pilot may wish to go around (low approach) in order to expedite a particular operation (a series of practice instrument approaches is an example of such an operation). Unless otherwise authorized by ATC, the low approach should be made straight ahead, with no turns or climb made until the pilot has made a thorough visual check for other aircraft in the area.

b. When operating within an airport traffic area, a pilot intending to make a low approach should contact the tower for approval. This request should be made prior to starting the final approach.

c. When operating to an airport, not within an airport traffic area, a pilot intending to make a low approach should, prior to leaving the final approach fix inbound (non-precision approach) or outer marker of fix used in lieu of the outer marker inbound (precision approach), so advise the FSS, UNICOM or make a broadcast as appropriate.

ATTENTION

Does your Unit have in its keeping a CAF vehicle (car, truck, jeep, etc.)? If so, please notify CAF Controller (512) 425-1057 so it can be carried on CAF books.



Memorandum

Date: 4 January 1991

Subject:

INFORMATION: Airshow Bulletin (91-2)

FROM: National Airshow Coordinator, AFS-2D

TO: ALL GADOs, FSDOs and ACDOs

THRU: Regional airshow Coordinators

Recently, we received an inquiry concerning 360° overhead approaches. In many warbird aircraft, the combination of older aerodynamic design limits, low-gear speeds, and the affect of large piston engine/propeller propulsion at reduced speeds make an overhead approach particularly desirable. There are basically two elements of contention. One is whether the maneuver is appropriate or safe relative to other traffic and the second element is whether the aircraft angle of bank makes the maneuver aerobicic.

An air traffic controller may clear any aircraft for various types of VFR approaches (overhead, option, etc.) It is the responsibility of the pilot and controller to assure that there are no hazards to other air traffic. At airports where there is not an air traffic control facility (specifically a control tower) it is solely the responsibility of the pilot to avoid other traffic in the pattern. In some cases, airport rules may preclude various traffic patterns or approaches. Therefore, in each case, the safety of the maneuver must be evaluated under the prevailing conditions. There is not a regulation that categorically prohibits overhead approaches.

Most overhead approaches require a portion of the turning maneuver to be conducted between 45° — 55° angle of bank. Steep turns of this angle are required on most FAA pilot certification flight checks and are not aerobicic.

Ron Myres