

## Currency: It's not just about the money

By Richard Bertoli, CSIP

Dr. Warren Jensen, director of aeromedical research at the University of North Dakota, begins one of his excellent presentations on human factors and decision making by posing the question, "Is it possible to be legal and stupid at the same time?" The answer, of course, is yes. Some may recall the fact that a Part 91 operator can legally depart any airport under zero-zero conditions; legal, but arguably stupid. All pilots should comply with rules and regulations, if not for safety, then for the sake of the CFI whose signature is in your logbook. That being said, operating within the limits of the law does not absolve the pilot of his/her responsibility to use the soft stuff between the ears.

### **Barely Legal**

I've recently been amazed by the number of pilots I talk with who are unclear at best, completely ignorant at worst, regarding the regulations governing minimum pilot experience. The biannual flight review, instrument proficiency check, 90 day landing requirements, instrument currency, night currency, etc. should be covered in any comprehensive private pilot or instrument rating course. Below is a table delineating what's required by law (14 CFR §61.56 & 57) for a pilot to act as PIC of a civil aircraft:

Item	Interval	Who can administer?	Acceptable Substitute	Notes
Biannual Flight Review	24 calendar months	CFI, Designated Examiner, Company Check Airman, FAA	Checkride for additional rating or certificate; WINGS program; Pt. 121, 135 Line Checks	Requires a minimum of 1 hour ground and 1 hour flight instruction
Instrument Proficiency Check	Variable	CFII, DE, FAA	Instrument currency (See description below)	Required after 6 month "grace period" expires to fly IFR
Landing Currency	3 landings within preceding 90 days	N/A	None	Req'd for carriage of passengers; Night landings must be full stop to count.
Instrument Currency	6 IAPs, holding, and navaid tracking within preceding 6 months	N/A	May be flown in approved simulator, FTD, or PCATD	-
6 month Instrument Currency "Grace Period"	Within 6 months immediately following expiration of Instrument Currency	Safety pilot must be appropriately rated in the aircraft and hold a current medical (§91.109)	May be flown in approved simulator, FTD, or PCATD	Instrument currency requirements flown under hood with safety pilot on board

### **Is it enough?**

Do the existing requirements provide enough guidance for the average private pilot to safely operate a technologically advanced aircraft like the Cirrus in hard IFR conditions? At AirShares Elite, we don't think so. AirShares policy requires an annual proficiency check and recommends regular refresher flights with a qualified CFI. The new simulator technology available offers an economical alternative for recurrent training and allows for the experience of training scenarios that can not be replicated intentionally in a real aircraft. One of the perks of AirShares ownership is the training support, which includes hassle-free access to a roster of highly qualified local CFIs, tracking of pilot currency, insider's information to the latest from Cirrus Design and UND, and articles like this. It's like that Verizon television advertisement with "the network" of a few hundred people with trucks and helicopters standing behind you. I hope this isn't perceived as "big brother" by some, but it's in all our best interest to keep insurance premiums low, airplanes intact and our pilots alive. Stay current; fly safe.