

“Bleep” Approved Training

In the August issue of the *Twin Cessna Flyer Newsletter* a member wrote with the question of where can Cessna Factory Approval Flight Training be obtained. The Editor correctly responded with there is no such reference provided by Cessna.

As a CFII and an “Entity, i.e., a school” that is accepted by most Insurance Underwriters to conduct Initial and Recurrent Training in Cessna Piston Twins, I often interface with Twin Cessna Purchasers and Underwriters. This includes Owners and Buyers evaluating the quoted training requirements.

With respect to Cessna Piston Twins, the term Factory Approved Training has simply become a regularly misused term. There is no such list or referral from the Cessna Aircraft Company. It does not exist. Simply put, other than for their Maintenance and Parts Support for Piston Twins, Cessna does not recognize their existence.

Up until approximately the early 1980’s, Cessna conducted the Pilot Training for new Twin Owner’s in-house at a first-class training facility. These courses were called Red Carpet Courses. If you purchased a new 340A, you received a week of ground school for two pilots. Flight training in your aircraft was an option. I attended every course as a Twin Cessna Marketing Specialist.

With the development of Full-Motion Simulators, and other high-quality Flight Training Devices, plus the growing liability issue, Cessna contracted with Flight Safety International (FSI) for all pilot training.

Even today if you buy a new Cessna Jet or Caravan, training at Flight Safety is included. Buy a used Citation from a dealer or individual and it is no different than purchasing a 1975 Cessna 172 or Cessna 414 at the local airport. There is no Factory Approved Training. Cessna is not in the equation of your purchasing a used anything.

The people misusing the term are primarily Insurance Agents and Underwriters. When I point out to them the above facts, the reply is usually just that’s the phrase we use or that’s printed in our policy. A phrase in a policy based on a non-existing thing. Roger that. The correct term should be Insurance Approved Training.

In reality it is the Underwriters that approve or accept the formal training programs of the firms that are in the Flight Training business. I am referring to firms that conduct “Simulator Training” with a specific syllabus for an aircraft model, i.e., Flight Safety, SimCom, SimuFlite, Recurrent Training Center, PrestoSim and others.

In addition, firms that conduct “in-aircraft training” are also approved/accepted. Examples are Aviation Enhancements, ATM and others.

Obviously, SimCom cannot come to your town. The in-aircraft training guys will.

Another area where aircraft owners must be diligent regarding Flight Instructors is the insurance requirement, that the Pilot-In-Command have attended Factory Approved Recurrent Training within the past year. This mostly applies to new Owners, perhaps those needing to log 25-50 hours dual with an appropriately rated CFI, and one also meeting the policy rules of aircraft type Recurrent Training within 12 months.

If you are a legal PIC in your aircraft, but only needing Recurrent Training then, other than your own demands for quality Flight Instruction, there is a gray area for what constitutes “recurrent”. Few would agree that some type of refresher is better than nothing, but be certain what your policy considers Recurrent Training.

Up to this point this article was primarily to address the question about “Factory Approved Training”. But read on, I am aging and getting wiser.

Many aviation subjects you read about, i.e., Training, Insurance, Twin versus Single, Multi-Engine Flying, Weather and others, will continually be written about. Maybe a new group of pilots and authors will come along, but some subjects just get made “recurrent”. We will get reminded of what we know.

But think about these thoughts. Like Pilot Techniques, there is no absolute right or wrong.

Do you not want the best shop/the best mechanic working on your aircraft? They may cost more. They may have a waiting list. Seems logical. Do you not want the best training source/the best instructor working with you? They/He or She may cost more. They may have a waiting list. Seems logical.

Many pilots do have the above standard for the aircraft, but do they for their Initial or Recurrent Training source? I assure you the convenience of nearby maintenance, with its perceived savings, has cost many owners dearly when at a Pre-Purchase Inspection or Annual with a true specialist doing the work. What was really saved and at what risk along the way?

Recurrent Training for many Twin Cessna Owners is annually and there is the FAA Flight Review bi-annually. If a 25-30 year old Pressurized Twin needs more maintenance than a new aircraft to keep it in a first class ready to perform condition, does an older pilot, especially one flying only 50-75 hours per year, need more training than annually? And, add the fact that often some pilots, perhaps retired, log hours in clumps, i.e., 10-12 hours on a vacation and then do no flying for a few weeks. Not good for the aircraft. Not good for the pilot.

Do new Twin Cessna Pilots, especially those with low total pilot hours, limited multi-engine experience and limited hard-core training experience, need to seek out the graying Twin Cessna CFI's and say yes I was good in my Bonanza, Cirrus or Mooney, etc. And, I remain a smart guy. Therefore, "show me " what I do not know. Fly to him. Fly him in.

I have always had the typical love/hate relationship with Simulators. It is true only FSI has the true FAA defined Full Motion Simulators. In the past few years I have attended SimCom in Orlando or Scottsdale two to four times per year. True, I need the training, but I am often accompanying a new Twin Cessna Owner under the post-sale terms of an Acquisition Agreement.

The Flight Training Devise at SimCom is real enough for me and everyone I have attended with. It is no endorsement of SimCom, just any observation. With no pun intended, if your attitude on day one is right, you will leave upon course completion in good form.

Posted on my website, www.jtatwins.com under Temple's Tips #36 is a June 1998 article by aviation author Mike Busch, where he compares the Sim Schools. Also on my website under Links are links to Sim Training Schools and several "In-Aircraft" Training firms.

Those pilots that fly with me, or with whom I talk training, know we'd never assume a complex 25-30 year old Twin will only get maintenance once a year at an Annual. It needs more servicing to be first class.

Likewise, is two to six hours or Recurrent Training enough per year? How much ground school is need to keep that critical need to know staff ready to go? How much Dual Flight time is needed to be proficient? Does anyone on-board deserve less? Note the letters PRO is the word proficient.

I urge all Twin Cessna Pilots reading this article to get their calendar planner. Schedule formal, type specific, i.e., 310, 340, 414, 421, etc, training at an approved school. Six months later mark off, that means commit to it, a couple of days of In-Aircraft Recurrent Training with an Insurance Approved Training Firm/Pilot. Commit. You now are programmed to get the best from Simulator Training and In-Aircraft Training. The problems and emergencies that cannot be duplicated safely, or at all, in an aircraft are safely experienced in the Sim. No, as a CFI, I cannot make the aircraft catch on fire and I will not do dumb things close to the ground. We will crash and burn in the Sim. We all do. You will get over it. I mope for a few hours when I mess up bad, but I know I will recall the bad decision, or reaction, if ever experiencing the problem for real and I am confident I will do well.

And, there is no Sim that flies like your aircraft. With a competent instructor, and in the appropriate conditions, seeing in certain situations or configurations exactly how your aircraft performs is worth triple price of fuel.

Twice a year. Two to two and a half days in school and six months later, two to four hours in the aircraft and two-three hours of ground school. Assume five-six days per year was an FAA requirement to be legal ($365/6=2\%$). Seems reasonable for what we are allowed to do.

I use the term Modern Multi-Engine Training when discussing and justifying training in your aircraft. Number One, the engines are tougher than you think. Setting up Zero Thrust for a few minutes a year will not destroy your engines. The temperatures will not get that cold. And a fully Shut Down Engine with Propeller Feathered should be performed in your Annual In-Aircraft work out. The gain in your brain, the confidence you will have in your one-of-a-kind flying machine is so valuable. Questions, maybe even doubts, about a what-if, are often eliminated. Fly with confidence. Do you not want to know, at least one a year, that each Propeller will indeed turn its edge to the wind and stop? This is not about a turbo-charged engine in a training role 5-7 days per week, with dozens of Shut Downs/Featherings a week. No, just once a year, for a controlled few minutes. When I conduct an In-Flight Shut Down with proper securing based on the scenario of needing to land ASAP and then conduct an In-Flight Restart, I can feel the aircraft saying “thanks I knew I could do as advertised on just one, either side, take your choice.” And, I can observe the shot of pilot confidence injected into the pilot’s forever-stored database.

Maintain your magnificent Twin Cessna. They do great things, if you do your part. If you do not, it can cost you a lot of money. Costs over and above the typical maintenance.

Maintain the pilot – the Master System. Excellent sources for maintaining the pilot are available. The expense is relative. If you do not, the cost can be unrecoverable.

Loud and Clear.