



COPA's Response to BasicMed

Recently the United States congress passed new legislation creating a non ICAO-compliant medical class for pilots with reduced requirements for certification with hopes of encouraging more people to become pilots and stimulate the General Aviation industry. In response to the public advocacy undertaken on this issue by the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), COPA has received feedback from our own membership about potential reactions and future policy development on the Canadian side of the border.

COPA has been actively discussing this issue both with AOPA's senior staff as well as with senior officials at Transport Canada and trying to establish what is possible, what is achievable, and what course of action will best benefit pilots on both sides of the border. In that regard, COPA has developed a proposal that we feel achieves tangible results for Canadian pilots, while following in the spirit of allowing US-BasicMed pilots to operate safely in Canada.

COPA's proposal would see Transport Canada allow operations within Canadian airspace of aircraft piloted by BasicMed holders that match the conditions currently applied to holders of Recreational Pilot Permits (RPP) validated by Category 4 medical certificates. Certain aspects of the Basic Med regime are not dissimilar to our own Cat 4 medical, which allows pilots certain restricted privileges for those who cannot, or choose not, to qualify for an ICAO-compliant Category 3 medical or higher. In COPA's view, allowing Basic Med operations that meet the conditions of RPP operations would not pose an increased risk to aviation safety or the public. Our pledge to AOPA is to work with officials at Transport Canada to make this a reality.

In reciprocity, we are seeking Transport Canada's and AOPA's support in advocating the Federal Aviation Administration to expand the [Special Flight Authority](#) (SFA) regime to include Canadian certified, limited, and amateur-built aircraft operated by Canadian RPP holders. Subject to obtaining an SFA, holders of Canadian PPL (A), RPP (A), or Ultralight Permit can currently operate ultralight aircraft in the United States if the pilot also holds a valid medical certificate appropriate to the license or permit held. In the case of an RPP holder, this is accomplished by holding a valid Class 1, 3, or 4 medical certificate.

It is COPA's opinion that allowing the operation of certified, limited, and amateur-built aircraft operated by Canadian RPP holders within the existing SFA regime in place for ultralights, does not pose any meaningful change to public risk or aviation safety.

Therefore, we support and encourage all steps undertaken by Transport Canada to permit US Basic Med operations in Canada, provided they comply with the same restrictions applicable to holders of RPPs. In return, we call on Transport Canada and AOPA to advocate to the FAA for Canadian RPP holders to be permitted, subject to the SFA requirements, to operate certified, amateur-built, and limited-class aircraft in the United States.

On behalf of Canadian pilots, we look forward to making this proposal a reality. Together with our partners and stakeholders, we will reduce the regulatory burden on general aviation while maintaining our high safety standards and collectively advance the Canadian freedom to fly.

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