



P.O. BOX 234
JENKS, OK 74037

703.548.2030
ATEC@ATEC-AMT.ORG
ATEC-AMT.ORG

Aviation maintenance education calls on Congress to modernize outdated FAA maintenance technical school regulations

The regulation dictating what aviation maintenance educational institutions must teach aspiring aviation maintenance mechanics has not been significantly updated in more than 50 years. In an age where technological advances are constantly driving innovation for safer and more efficient aircraft, schools are required to teach techniques for constructing and maintaining the Wright Flyer. Industry is left with the cost of retraining graduates to complete basic tasks required to maintain a modern, sophisticated aircraft.

In November 2015, the FAA issued a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) for Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 147, the regulation governing aviation maintenance technician schools that hold an FAA certificate.

In its comments to the rulemaking, a coalition of aviation organizations decried the agency's continued reliance on class time at the expense of technical capability and called for a less prescriptive rule that would exempt schools already beholden to Department of Education quality standards from duplicative oversight.

Given the agency's failure to timely address rulemaking for part 147, the 2018 FAA Reauthorization bill specifically directed the agency to promulgate a final rule within six months, a date that has come and gone.

In April 2019, three-and-a-half years after its NPRM, the FAA published a supplemental proposed rule. The proposal would allow more flexibility for seat time requirements, but layers in more prescriptive requirements and approvals that will stifle the already inadequate workforce pipeline.

Given the anticipated rulemaking timeline—agency officials have indicated a final rule is two years away from promulgation—and the FAA's insistence on approving programmatic elements better left to accreditation experts, the aviation community is asking Congress to once again step in. A proposed direct rule will ensure FAA officials focus on elements specific to aviation education, such as required equipment and instructor qualifications, and remove proposed duplicative mandates.

See related opinion piece from TheHill.com, Aviation struggles with 50-year-old maintenance training regulation, available at <https://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/transportation/345631-aviation-struggles-with-50-year-old-maintenance-training>.

About ATEC: *ATEC is a partnership of aviation maintenance training schools and employers. The council is dedicated to promoting and supporting technician education through its communications, advocacy programs and networking events.*