

# Montana and the Sky

Montana Department of Transportation

Aeronautics Division

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## FAA Takes Steps to Address COVID-19's Impact on the Aviation Industry

**Air Traffic Control Facilities:** The FAA is temporarily closing and thoroughly cleaning air traffic control facilities where employees have tested positive for COVID-19. Every air traffic control facility in the country has a contingency plan to keep air traffic moving safely when events affect normal operations. In some cases, this means transferring duties to adjacent facilities. Check for ATC ZERO impacts before you fly.

**Air Carrier Training Exemptions:** The FAA granted training exemptions to scheduled and on-demand air carriers due to the unprecedented circumstances associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The exemptions give operators grace periods for completing certain training and qualification requirements and give crewmembers relief from having to wear protective breathing equipment or oxygen masks in training, checking, or evaluation.

**FAA Construction Projects:** The FAA has temporarily stopped most construction projects at agency facilities to ensure the safety of employees, contractors, and the public during the COVID-19 pandemic. The agency is continuing projects that are in critical phases and would affect operations or safety if not completed. For now, the FAA is delaying the start of new projects. Design work on future projects will continue.

**Airport Construction Projects:** The FAA is working with airports across the country to determine the impacts COVID-19 is having on current and planned airport construction. Airport sponsors and the FAA will review all executed Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grants and determine which projects are safety critical. In addition, each phase of the project, estimated length of project delay, additional costs if the project is delayed, and impacts to overall airport or system operations will be reviewed. The FAA will identify and prioritize safety-critical projects through funding or process adjustments. The FAA and airport sponsors will work collaboratively to do whatever is reasonably possible to avoid delays in project construction and reduce the delay time when possible. Once a project is ready for construction, the airport owner is responsible for completing construction.

**Airport Improvement Program:** The FAA is working to ensure there are no delays awarding Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funds for 2020 because of COVID-19. Employees with the FAA's Office of Airports are in constant contact with airport sponsors to award all appropriated AIP funds by Sept. 30, 2020. The FAA has worked to automate the AIP process, which enables employees to work remotely and continue to process AIP grants under the current circumstances.

**Aviation Maintenance Technician Schools:** The FAA is working with staff and students at Aviation Maintenance Technician Schools (AMTS) to allow greater flexibility during the COVID-19 pandemic. The FAA's guidance to AMTS allows deviations from FAA policy on class schedules, electronic delivery of assignments, and the maximum number of absences. Each AMTS school is affected differently, and the FAA is addressing any deviation from policy or regulation on a case-by-case basis.

**Have Questions?** AOPA's Pilot Information Center staff are standing by to answer questions that are likely to arise in light of the FAA policy decision, based on each member's individual circumstances. Members can reach AOPA staff online, or by phone at 800-USA-AOPA (872-2672) Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Eastern time.

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The AOPA is continuously updating its coverage of the coronavirus pandemic's impact on general aviation to provide the most accurate information as changes occur.

Article summarized with permission from General Aviation News

## Yellowstone Airport COVID-19 Impacts

Many airports are adapting to the COVID-19 virus impacts and a drop in passenger traffic by over 90% in many instances. The Yellowstone Airport is already feeling the effects of the virus.

Yellowstone Airport is in the process of opening the airport for the season. It is expected the airport will continue to have daily air service, via SkyWest Airlines dba Delta Connection.

Air service will commence on May 7, 2020. During a normal season, the airport would average two flights per day with three flights on select peak days during the highest demand months. Due to COVID-19, for the first two months of the 2020 season, the airline will be reducing its frequency to one flight per day through June 30, 2020.

## Harlowton to Get New Instrument Approach



Harlowton Airport Photo Credit: Aeronautics Staff

The FAA proposed to establish two pieces of Class E airspace extending upward from 700 feet or more above the surface at the Harlowton Airport. The new airspace will allow IFR operations for the airport.

A new GPS RNAV approach will be established at the Harlowton Airport. The new approach will allow public users and air ambulance access to Harlowton at times when the weather is not VFR.



Tim Conway, Administrator

**Montana and the Sky**  
Department of Transportation

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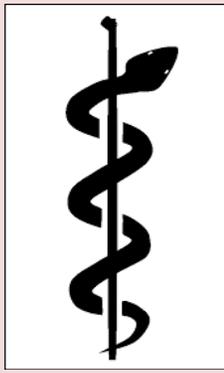
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## Is Your Medical Expiring Soon?



If your medical is expiring between now and June 30, 2020 you will not have to venture out to visit an AME. The FAA will not take enforcement action against airmen who fly with medical certificates that expire between March 31 and June 30, 2020, due to pressures and risks put on our healthcare system from COVID-19. This discretionary accommodation does not apply to pilots or flight engineers whose medical certificate expired before March 31, 2020.

Also, regardless of the date of expiration of a medical certificate, this accommodation does not commit to nonenforcement for noncompliance with medical certificate duration standards that occurs after June 30, 2020. It doesn't apply to anyone who knows or has reason to know of any medical condition that would make the person unable to meet the requirements for the medical certificate necessary for the pilot operation. It also does not provide exemption if you are taking medication or receiving other treatment for a medical condition that results in being unable to meet the requirements for the medical certificate necessary for the pilot operation you are performing.

For questions on this new guidance contact James Barry, FAA manager of Policy/Audit/Evaluation, Enforcement Division, Office of the Chief Counsel, FAA. Email: [james.barry@faa.gov](mailto:james.barry@faa.gov).

## Is Your Airplane Ready for Spring Flying?

The grass is starting to turn green and poke up through the melting snow in Montana. Pilots will be thinking of getting their airplanes out of the hangar and going for a "\$100 hamburger" or getting back into the dawn patrol routine. This brings up the question: What should a pilot do before flying an aircraft that has been sitting for a while?

Crankcase oil does not wear out, but it becomes contaminated with fine particles of dirt, metal, moisture, unburned fuel and the acid that can form while the plane is sitting.

When an engine is started some raw fuel goes directly into the cylinders and does not get completely burned. It can end up in the crankcase, where sulphur in the fuel combines with the moisture from condensate to form acid. This can wear surfaces inside the engine. This rust gets knocked loose and on startup will act as an abrasive in the oil and start wear on critical surfaces.

Slopping the entrails of your engine with a fresh coating of oil before putting it away for winter hibernation is an important maintenance item. Changing the oil before prolonged storage

is recommended by many manufactures.

But, while sitting, your engine draws in warm moist air. When it cools off, moisture condenses inside the crankcase. This means there will most likely be water in the oil in the spring.

When you start flying your aircraft again in the spring, your engine oil temperature needs to be in the 180°F range to ensure that you boil off the water in the oil during flight. You need to take steps to ensure your oil temperature hits the 180° mark during cruise conditions.

Don't forget that moisture in the dead air space in the fuel tanks can create condensation, too. This will result in water in the fuel. It is recommended to store the airplane with the fuel tanks always topped off. If you sump your tanks a few times and rock the plane in between, you should get most of the water out. Rain and snow can get into your aircraft and pool in the belly. This can cause a substantial unknown weight gain, (which can result in a dramatic aft CG shift from the slosh upon rotation) corrosion and other system malfunctions.



Photo Credit: Sporty's

Check baffles, door and windscreen seals, intakes, NACA inlets, batteries, tire pressures and lights during your first preflight of the season. Rinse and clean heavily soiled surfaces and windscreens before you fly. It is surprising how much dust can accumulate on an airplane while sitting.

Before taking off, ops check all your equipment and avionics onboard the aircraft to make sure it is all operating correctly. It is better to identify discrepancies on the ground, rather than letting them become distractions in flight. It is also a good idea to review your aircraft logbooks and required documents to ensure the aircraft meets all required inspection criteria and is airworthy.

Are you current and proficient to carry passengers or launch on a long cross-country after not flying all winter?

# High School Students Interested in Aviation Should Apply Early



## 2020 AVIATION CAREER EXPLORATION ACADEMY

- Discovery Flights
- Survival skills training
- Airport tour
- Air Traffic Control tour
- Air National Guard
- Space telescope
- More than a dozen aviation business tours
- General Aviation fly in
- Tour Boeing
- Aircraft mechanic college tour
- Talk to professional pilots, mechanics and engineers
- Fishing and swimming in Canyon Ferry Lake during the evenings where we will spend 2 nights in cabins

### ACE Camp

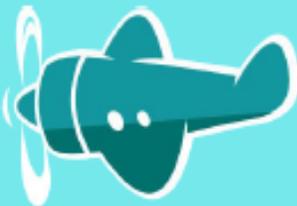
Explore what you can do in aviation!

# JUNE 15-17

## Helena Airport

### \$120

Open to high school student who will be Freshman-Seniors (or who just graduated)



Visit [www.mdt.mt.gov/aviation/events.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/aviation/events.shtml) to register or call (406)444-2506

*Includes 2-night stay at the Montana Learning Center, meals, flights, ground transportation during the camp, materials and all tours*

### *Scholarships are Available!*

*Visit our website to learn more:  
<https://www.mdt.mt.gov/aviation/events.shtml>*

## Registrations are due by June 11

Registrations are limited to 15 students.

Register early to secure your spot!

This camp is offered by the Montana Aeronautics Division. It is designed to expose students to many career possibilities in aviation. Parent/guardian must sign liability and photo release required for participation.

# Stock at Large on Backcountry Airstrips

Montana's backcountry airstrips are popular camping destinations for pilots during the flying season. As we know, using these strips comes with a set of particular hazards and demands from pilots' skills and knowledge.

Something we often think about when flying in the backcountry is animals on the runway during takeoff or landing. What isn't given as much consideration is an animal's interference with aircraft once they are parked for the night. Yes, one might be thinking about Grizzly bears in the area, but do you think about horse and mule threats at night? Maybe not as much!

At many backcountry airports in and outside Montana, there could be stock grazing on the strip. Mainly these animals are let out to munch the lush grass on the airport at night. Horses and mules are curious critters and can come up to you, your aircraft or your camp. If it is dark, it is hard to keep an eye out for them and monitor any mischief they may be up to. One hazard of grazing stock is damage to your aircraft. Airplanes make a nice scratching post for the dusty, itchy back of a pack mule that just had a long day of hard work.

There are a few things you can do to keep stock away from your airplane and prevent it from being damaged. A couple of the most popular methods include packing in lightweight, solar/battery-operated electric fences or stringing a "ribbon wire" around your airplane so animals can see a physical barrier. These systems are often inexpensive, lightweight, relatively compact and effective. Some pilots just prefer to camp under their wing or near their airplane to keep an eye and ear on things.

As we move into spring, we are left with a strong desire to return to these prized strips. Hopefully we spend our time preparing our knowledge and skills to have another safe backcountry flying season.



*Mule graze on runway and near aircraft at Schafer backcountry airstrip.*

*Photo Credit: Montana pilot Robert Shropshire*

## Schafer Meadows-Runway Improvements Coming Soon

Schafer will undergo a runway improvement project beginning in May. Work will be performed with traditional horse-drawn equipment. Check NOTAM's for updates on the project, runway usability and status before flying into Schafer (or anywhere)!



*Schafer Meadows Photo Credit: Aeronautics Staff*

# Quiz Time!

## What do you know?

1. You're 30 miles from a VOR. If you're 1 degree off course, how many miles off course are you?

A: 1/8 mile  
 B: 1/4 mile  
 C: 1/2 mile  
 D: 3/4 mile

2. How do your magnetos power your spark plugs?

A: The left magneto powers the left cylinders, and the right magneto powers the right ones  
 B: Each spark plug receives power from both magnetos  
 C: The right magneto only provides power if the left magneto is inoperative  
 D: Each magneto powers one of the two spark plugs in each cylinder

3. Satellite photos have shown mountain waves extending as far as \_\_\_\_ miles downwind of the Rocky Mountains?

A: 300  
 B: 500  
 C: 700  
 D: 900

4. If you descend at a three-degree flight path angle for two miles, how many feet will you descend?

A: 300 feet  
 B: 600 feet  
 C: 900 feet  
 D: 1,200 feet

5. When you approach a mountain range from the upwind side, you'll typically experience a?

A: Slight updraft  
 B: Serious updraft  
 C: Slight downdraft  
 D: Serious downdraft

5: A  
 4: B  
 3: C  
 2: D  
 1: C  
**Answer key:**

# Sponsor a Montana Student

## — Get Them Involved in Aviation

Are you interested in getting Montana high school students involved in and interested in aviation? The Aviation Career Exploration (ACE) Academy is a resident camp offered each summer for high school students to learn about careers in aviation and explore flight. This fantastic camp is put on by the Montana Aeronautics Division. You can impact a student's future with your life-changing donation of \$120 to the scholarship fund and send a student to ACE!

This three-day resident camp helps students from across the state explore careers in the aviation industry. Students tour various aviation facilities and businesses, and hear from industry experts to learn what kinds of careers are available. This year, ACE Camp will be held in Helena and at the Montana Learning Center. Tuition includes lodging, discovery flight, meals, supplies, drinks and ground transportation during the camp.

In order for a student to receive a scholarship from the donation fund, students must submit an essay explaining their interest in aviation and financial need for the award. Applicants will be selected by the Aeronautics Division prior to ACE Camp. In 2019, 12 students were sponsored by generous individuals and businesses in Montana. Thank you! For 2020, we have 15 slots available. Sponsors are welcome to attend and participate in ACE Camp, and volunteers are always welcome! ACE Camp will be June 15-17, 2020.

Contact Aeronautics to set up your sponsorship! Call (406) 444-2506 or email [mdtaerosafetyed@mt.gov](mailto:mdtaerosafetyed@mt.gov).



ACE students tour a Blackhawk at the Helena Army National Guard Photo Credit: Aeronautics Staff

Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided on request. Persons who need an alternative format should contact the Office of Civil Rights, Department of Transportation, 2701 Prospect Avenue, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620. Telephone 406-444-5416 or Montana Relay Service at 711.

# FAA Assures Airport Funding Amid COVID-19 Concerns



Lincoln Airport project

Photo Credit: Aeronautics Staff

The FAA's Northwest Mountain Regional Office has reached out amid concerns over AIP (Airport Improvement Program) funding for FY2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the FAA offices of airports employees are remaining in constant contact with airport sponsors to award funding and ensure

there are no delays in AIP funding. Since the AIP grant process has already been streamlined and paperless, there will be little effect on processing. The FAA is taking steps to be as flexible as possible to continue to provide support where airports are facing challenges, as well as coordinating with State Aviation Agencies.

Additionally, the FAA is working with airport sponsors across the country to determine the effects of COVID-19 on current and planned airport construction. It will offer reimbursable agreements, determining which projects are safety-critical, and if any projects should be delayed. Implementation of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act is also in the works, providing \$10 billion in economic relief for the nation's airports, including \$100 million for general aviation airports.

## SUN 'n FUN Canceled

The 2020 SUN 'n FUN Aerospace Expo was canceled because of restrictions stemming from COVID-19.

Since 2014 SUN 'n FUN has been the main fundraiser for the Aerospace Center for Excellence (ACE). ACE focuses on providing aviation STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) for youth.

The SUN 'n FUN Aerospace Expo raises more than \$2 million annually for STEM education programs and various aviation scholarships as well as learning centers every year.

ACE is working towards continuing to support its fundraising missions in light of the Sun 'N' Fun event cancelation. The organization is utilizing digital technology to bring events online. Stay tuned to the SUN 'N FUN website [www.flysnf.org](http://www.flysnf.org) to see what will be released and available soon!

## EAA AirVenture Oshkosh Still a Go, For Now

The Experimental Aircraft Association announced that AirVenture is still scheduled to begin on July 20, 2020. The next decision point will be in the middle of May. The EAA should have a clearer direction on what will happen to the event at that time; it could continue as planned, be postponed or canceled.

## Calendar of Events

**May 16, 2020 — AOPA Rusty Pilots Seminar.** Hosted by Blue Goose Aviation in Polson, MT from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Polson Airport in Hangar #35. Lunch and a pilot discussion will follow the seminar. For questions please contact Joe at (719) 393-5550. If you have not flown in a while, come out and meet other pilots and let us help you get back into the air. This seminar is free for AOPA members and \$79.00 for non-members. **CANCELED**

**June 01- 05, 2020 — AFRCC Advanced Inland Search Planning Course.** Helena **POSTPONED**

**June 06, 2020 — EAA's Helena Chapter 344 Morrison Park "Burger Burn."** All aviation aficionados, including members of EAA, MPA and the general public, are invited to participate in this spring warm-up to the 2020 flying season from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Free hamburger or hot dog and soft drink available. Morrison Park is located just east of Helena College airport campus off Airport Road. Those who fly in may park in the southwest corner of the general aviation ramp in the vicinity of Exec Air's hangars. For information contact Ron Rasmuson (406) 461-1093.

**June 13, 2020 — Fly-In Breakfast in Lewistown (KLWT).** From 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. enjoy pancakes, eggs and sausage. Many Cubs migrating to the Johnson Creek Fly-In the following weekend are expected. A Steam Gas Tractor show will also be held on the airport. For information contact Pete Smith at (406) 366-1435.

**June 15-17, 2020 — Aviation Career Exploration (ACE) Camp.** Program geared toward high school students interested in aviation. For more information see Page 4, call (406) 444-2506 or email [mlindberg@mt.gov](mailto:mlindberg@mt.gov).

**July 31- August 01, 2020 — Three Forks Fly-In.** 43<sup>rd</sup> annual fly-in hosted by the Montana Antique Aircraft Association. Friday and Saturday breakfast, lunch and dinner are available. Saturday flour bombing/spot landing and ping pong ball drop. Free and open to the public. Showers and camping on site. For more information contact Pat Green (406) 539-1880.

**August 2, 2020 — Bowman Fly-In and Car Show.** Starting at 10:00 a.m. there will be food and drinks available, kids games, airplane rides, and awards for best of show and longest distance flown. Other special surprises to be announced. For more information contact Greg at (406) 593-1702.



**VISION ZERO**

zero deaths · zero serious injuries

MONTANA DEPARTMENT  
OF TRANSPORTATION

**May 2020**

5403

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## **Vision Zero: A Goal for Everyone**

In 2019, there were 184 fatalities on Montana roads.

What does that mean? 184 parents, children, grandparents, friends, siblings, spouses, and other loved ones had lives that were cut short. It also means countless tears and shattered lives for those left with the aftermath of unsafe driving behaviors. Which loved one are you prepared to lose? If your answer is none, then Vision Zero is also YOUR goal.

It will take every one of us to work towards the day that Vision Zero is met, and the fatality total reads "ZERO." Two of the highest contributing factors to traffic fatalities in 2019 were alcohol and no seat belt.

These are behaviors that can be changed! Start by always wearing your seatbelt and planning for sober transportation. Remind your loved ones and those around you to do the same.

**-Director Mike Tooley, MDT**

Visit [www.mdt.mt.gov/visionzero](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/visionzero) for more information.

**VISION ZERO** ★  
zero deaths · zero serious injuries

**MONTANA DEPARTMENT  
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