

USA report to CIMP
June 2008

For the years 2007 - 2008 notable trends and occurrences in The United States with regards to aeromedical and general aviation are as follows:

- 1) The health of general aviation is in large part a product of new pilots entering the population of pilots. For 2007 Student Pilot Certificates numbered 84,339 showing a small decrease from 2006. Total pilot certificates of all kind total 590,349 a decrease of 7100 from 2006. The total flight hours have not changed significantly in 2007. FAA records show and estimate for General Aviation of 23,835,000 hrs flown. This number has been essentially the same for the past 3 years. This is down from the high of 29,246,000 in 1999. These numbers are affected by the large demand for pilots and are keeping student pilot starts stable, but with the higher cost of fuel and flying in general will be a definite factor in an anticipated decreasing flight activity. The small drop in number of pilots may be due to general attrition of pilots with increasing age of the population in general.
- 2) The newer Sport Pilot certificate showed a definite up tick with 2,332 certificates held. The average age of these pilots has around 53 year old contrasted with the average age of all pilots being 45 years. This is likely due to the relaxed medical requirements. The decreased cost of owning and flying sport aircraft. It has definitely a factor in making this a more popular route to obtain a pilot's certificate.
- 3) Accident data for 2007 showed that general aviation accidents totaled 1631, with fatal accidents at 284 of the total. There were 486 fatalities with a rate of 1.19 fatalities per 100,000 hrs flown. Total accident rate was 6.84 per 100,000 hrs flown. These rates have not markedly changed from previous years.
- 4) The Federal government enacted legislation titled the "Fair Treatment of Experienced pilots" which came into effect in December of 2007. It essentially ended the "Age 60 Rule" regarding retirement of Part 121 air carrier pilots. It mirrored ICAO standards in this area allowing pilots to continue to fly for air carriers till age 65.
- 5) The FAA certification division has begun the process of totally computerizing medical certification of pilots use a new internet tool. The system is called "MedXpress" and allows the airman to input data over the internet replacing the paper 8500 form so well known to our pilots and aeromedical examiners. This system is not mandatory at this time but will certainly be the desired mode of documentation for the future.