

Obtaining a LODA for Transition Training in Experimental Amateur Built Aircraft

Written by Michael Farley, Waix 0056

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Recently, the FAA and the EAA have begun to realize the importance of transition training for pilots flying amateur built aircraft. With studies indicating the highest chance of an aircraft accident occurring in the first 5-10 hours of flight time, an emphasis has been placed on pilot training so that people may become familiar with their own make and model of airplane prior to flying their own aircraft.

Unfortunately, there are several roadblocks which make things difficult for a person to receive transition training in an experimental airplane. Federal Aviation Regulation 91.319 states that no experimental aircraft "is to be used for compensation or hire," as well as FAA Order 8130.2G which provides instructions on experimental aircraft Operating Limitations. In this guidance, a limitation is required to be placed on an experimental airplane which re-states FAR 91.319.

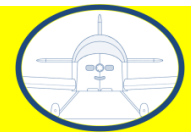
This can leave a builder/pilot of a homebuilt airplane in a bit of a problematic situation. Most owners of amateur built aircraft would love to get some flight time in the same make and model airplane they are building or buying, but unless they happen to know someone who is willing to offer free flight time, it's against the regulations to use someone else's airplane for transition training if payment is to be made.

The good news is that with a recent emphasis on safety, it's slowly becoming more commonplace for owners of homebuilt airplanes to team up with flight instructors and obtain FAA permission to provide their airplane for rental, if used for transition training purposes. This permission comes in the form of a Letter of Deviation Authority, or LODA.

Throughout the winter and spring of 2013, Sonex Aircraft, LLC began working on the foundation required in order to apply for their LODA. Obtaining a LODA would allow factory employees, with a flight instructor certificate, to use the company demonstrator aircraft for demonstration rides as well as transition training. The LODA expressly prohibits tailwheel transition and aerobatic training.

Officially released in May 2013, this factory option has proven to be immensely popular, with dozens of satisfied pilots already taking advantage of the Sonex T-Flight program before flying their own Sonex airplanes.

The second phase of this program is to assist builders, owners, and pilots obtain their own LODAs in an effort to create a widespread Sonex flight training network for anyone desiring Sonex flight time. This article will help guide a prospective flight instructor through the required steps in order to obtain their own LODA and begin offering transition training.



FAA guidance for the issuance of a LODA can be found with the FAA 8900.1, Volume 3, Chapter 11. In this document, paragraph 3-293 (C) provides the requirements for a person to apply for a LODA. This paragraph states that "A person applying to conduct flight training in an experimental aircraft which that person provides for compensation or hire must submit an application package to the FSDO in the district in which the training will take place." This application package must include the following:

- A letter that contains the following information:

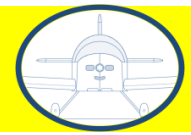
1. Identifying the name and address of the applicant
2. The name and contact information of the person responsible for the operation
3. Details of the type of training
4. The specific aircraft make(s) and model(s) to be used

- Copies of the following:

1. Each aircraft's airworthiness certificate
2. Each aircraft's operating limitations

- A training program which includes:

1. A description of any audiovisual aid, mockup, chart, aircraft component, and other special training aids used in any ground training (if applicable)
2. A description of each flight simulator used in training (if applicable)
3. A description of any special equipment used for each phase of training
4. Qualifications and ratings for each flight instructor providing training
5. Prerequisites for persons receiving ground or flight training
6. A description of each unit of instruction, including objectives, standards, and planned completion time
7. Expected accomplishments and standards for each stage of training

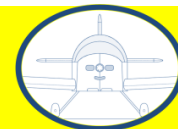


Sounds like a lot of work, doesn't it? The Sonex Builders and Pilots Foundation and Sonex Aircraft, LLC are about to make your job much easier! Download a free copy of the jointly effort T-Flight training syllabus which meets all of the requirements outlined above from Sonex Builders and Pilots Foundation website: http://www.sonexfoundation.com/Transition_Training.html. In addition, a template of the required letter needed for the application is also available. Simply fill out the letter with your personal information, download and print off the training syllabus, and make copies of your aircraft airworthiness certificate and operating limitations, and your application package is complete.

Once the FAA has obtained your application package, they will review the information provided to ensure it meets all required standards. Once reviewed, they will ensure all airworthiness requirements are met for the aircraft, and issue the LODA. In most cases, this process will only take a short amount of time and you will be ready to begin flight training in your Sonex aircraft.

Having gone through this process myself, I would also like to offer the following bits of advice:

- 1.** Even though there is no wording in the guidance for an aircraft inspection requirement, I highly recommend you have your aircraft and aircraft logbooks ready for an inspection. My FSDO interpreted the requirement of "ensuring all airworthiness requirements are met for the aircraft" to include an on-site inspection of the aircraft. This included an inspection of the logbooks to ensure all documentation is properly filled out. While not required, it may be in your best interest to be prepared, just in case.
- 2.** Contact the staff at Sonex Aircraft, LLC if you have any issues. Having gone through the LODA application process and having close ties with the EAA puts Sonex in a perfect position to provide assistance if any is required.
- 3.** Don't forget to ask your insurance company about coverage during flight training. My own insurance agent dealt with the insurance underwriter and I was quickly and easily approved for an amended policy which included providing dual instruction in my airplane. This did affect my insurance premiums, but I am able to pro-rate this coverage only during the months I provide instruction. This is an option I appreciate as I don't have to pay additional premiums during times I'm not providing instruction.
- 4.** Before you begin ground or flight training with a student, take the time to review the training syllabus to ensure they meet all prerequisites. Remember that a LODA does not cover training such as basic Private Pilot or Sport Pilot training, aerobatic training, or -



tailwheel endorsements. Also, don't forget about the new U.S. Citizen checks now required by the TSA for any flight student.

5. Be ready to have fun and meet a lot of happy students! You will find students love flying the Sonex airplanes and will love every minute of flying with you!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact myself, the Sonex Builders and Pilots Foundation, or the factory, Sonex Aircraft, LLC, for assistance.

Thank you,

Michael Farley, CFII/MEI

Vice President, SBPF

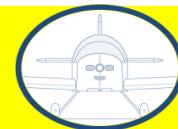
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mike@sonexfoundation.org

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*See below attached Example LODA Request Letter – Fill in as needed.



(Example LODA Request Letter – Fill In As Needed)

Federal Aviation Administration

Flight Standards District Office

(Local FSDO Address)

(Local FSDO Address)

(Your Name)

(Your Address)

(Your Address)

(Your Email Address)

(Your Phone Number)

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is intended to serve as an official application for a Letter of Deviation Authority (LODA) to allow (Your Name) to provide flight training in an experimental aircraft. (Your Name) will be responsible for the operation of this flight training which includes the following types of training:

1. Experimental aircraft specific make and model initial training.
2. Experimental aircraft specific make and model flight review training.

(Your Name) will be using the following experimental aircraft for these training courses:

Make: (Aircraft Make)

Model: (Aircraft Model)

Serial Number: (Aircraft S/N#)

Please note that this aircraft is a (Sonex/Waiex/Xenos) homebuilt aircraft which is produced by Sonex Aircraft, LLC Company, based in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. This aircraft can be used for the training for any pilot wishing to transition into the Sonex series of experimental aircraft. This includes the conventional tail Sonex, the Y-tail Waiex, the Xenos powered glider, and the single seat Onex. This aircraft was constructed by (Builders Name) and is Sport Pilot eligible.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,

(Your Name)