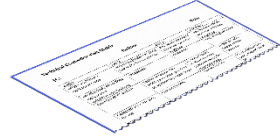


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Art byline: Lisa Turner

Hed: The Technical Counselor Visit: Navigating Paperwork

Byline: Lisa Turner

Excerpt: “If you can get your builder started off on the right foot from the moment they unpack everything, the paperwork responsibilities will be much smoother.”

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In the last article we talked about communicating bad news to the builder. This could be anything from poor workmanship to coming to grips with skills deficiencies. Once you paint the safety picture and the importance of quality and detail in getting the craft flying, the builder will understand the importance of listening to your advice, even if it's not what they want to hear.

Paperwork can be another thorny area. In the excitement of choosing and ordering a kit, the legalities are one of the last things we think about. If you can get your builder started off on the right foot from the moment they unpack everything, the paperwork responsibilities will be much smoother.

If the builder has not already ordered EAA's Amateur-Built Aircraft Certification Kit, encourage them to do so. The kit includes everything you need to register and certificate a new experimental amateur built aircraft. The 15-page, step-by-step Certification Guide walks you through the entire process—from getting the aircraft registered to the aircraft inspection—and provides samples of how to complete each form. The certification kit also includes all FAA forms, an Experimental sticker (in black), a data plate, and a placard decal sheet.

While all of these items can be obtained by the builder through some applied time and due diligence, for less than \$20 this kit, to me, is a no-brainer. As a Technical Counselor I keep some of these kits on hand and usually give them to the builder, but this is your choice.

The next thing to do is help the builder understand and arrange the documentation that came with the kit. Lay out all of the manuals and other information, and list what you have. Double check what you have against the packing slip and the parts list. If there's anything missing, you want to find out now, not later.

Determine a good spot in the workshop for the documentation and paperwork, which will slowly grow as the airplane goes together. It should be a location where the messes of construction won't layer onto the books and notepads. Making a prop up double document holder where you can open the instructions at eye level will keep everything clean and be accessible.

Next, help the builder begin their builder's log. Explain why this is so important. Not only does it serve to keep track of build activities, it can track finances, documents any problems encountered in the build, provides a place for miscellaneous information, and, most importantly, is a critical show and tell document for the FAA airworthiness inspector or designee when they come to approve the airplane for testing. Make sure the builder understands that this document along with pictures (with the builder in many of them) is one of the few ways the inspector can determine if the builder actually did the work, and how much work they did.

Finally, take the time to review the FAA regulations concerning amateur building, and make sure the builder understands what they can and cannot do as they build their aircraft. For example, it's ok to contract out what most of us consider big jobs – such as fabricating and outfitting the instrument panel, making upholstery, and painting the aircraft.

On subsequent visits, check to see how the documentation side is being organized, and offer help if it starts to look confusing. If your builder has minimal documentation, consider helping them assemble a POH (Pilot's Operating Handbook). See the February, 2018 issue of Sport Aviation for an article on how to build a POH.

I've always thought of the documents for the build as the glue to the future.

Link to EAA's Amateur-Built Aircraft Certification Kit:

<https://www.eaa.org/videos/870031655001>

To order, call EAA at 800-843-3612 or

visit <https://www.eaa.org/Shop/ProductCatalog/Product.aspx?ID=2583379&SubTopicID=941>

LINK: February, 2018 issue of Sport Aviation: "No Aircraft Manual? Write One."