

FAA News



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FAA Proposes New Policy on Antidepressants for Pilots

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today announced that it will consider the special issuance of a medical certificate to pilots who are taking medication for mild to moderate depression, conditions that now bar them from all flying duties.

On a case-by-case basis beginning April 5, pilots who take one of four antidepressant medications – Fluoxetine (Prozac), Sertraline (Zoloft), Citalopram (Celexa), or Escitalopram (Lexapro) – will be allowed to fly if they have been satisfactorily treated on the medication for at least 12 months. The FAA will not take civil enforcement action against pilots who take advantage of a six-month opportunity to share any previously non-disclosed diagnosis of depression or the use of these antidepressants.

“I’m encouraging pilots who are suffering from depression or using antidepressants to report their medical condition to the FAA,” said FAA Administrator Randy Babbitt. “We need to change the culture and remove the stigma associated with depression. Pilots should be able to get the medical treatment they need so they can safely perform their duties.”

The FAA’s policy is consistent with recommendations from the Aerospace Medical Association, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, Air Line Pilots Association and the International Civil Aviation Organization. The Civil Aviation Authority of Australia, Transport Canada and the U.S Army already allow some pilots to fly using antidepressant medications.

Psychiatrists and Aviation Medical Examiners who have specialized training under the Human Intervention and Motivation Study (HIMS) program will help the FAA evaluate and monitor pilots under this new policy. The HIMS program was established 40 years ago and has been highly effective for the assessment, treatment, and medical certification of pilots who need help with alcohol and drug issues.

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The policy statement is on display in the *Federal Register* at <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/public-inspection> and allows for public comment until May 3. A notice regarding the special enforcement action related to the new policy is available at the same website.

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