



CBP and Domestic General Aviation

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) secures America's borders and carries out an important and related Homeland Security mission, fulfilled with partner agencies, to secure America's national airspace. CBP's Office of Air and Marine (OAM) has a critical role in this national security mission which at times requires OAM personnel to interact with members of the General Aviation (GA) community. OAM is committed to working with the GA community to ensure that pilots understand CBP's law enforcement mission, responsibilities, and potential implications for GA activities. The aviation environment is highly controlled by Federal Aviation Regulations. While our experience is that most pilots abide by these regulations and other applicable federal law, some do not, and there are criminal elements who seek to exploit the freedom and convenience of operating GA aircraft to conduct illegal activities, such as transportation of narcotics or other contraband that may be in furtherance of international smuggling schemes.

CBP's Role in Airspace Security

The National Strategy for Aviation Security was developed at the direction of the President to protect the Nation and its interests from threats in the Air Domain. The Secretary of Homeland Security, in accordance with National Security

Presidential Directive 47 / Homeland Security Presidential Directive 16, coordinates the operational implementation of the Strategy, including the integration and synchronization of related Federal programs and initiatives. The Supporting Plan to the National Strategy for Aviation Security, the Air Domain Surveillance and Intelligence Integration Plan, prescribes CBP's role in, among other responsibilities, "detecting and identifying potential air threats to the United States." In furtherance of CBP's responsibilities under the National Strategy and its Supporting Plan, CBP agents and officers exercise legal authorities under federal law, including 14 C.F.R. § 61.3(l) and 49 U.S.C. § 44103(d) with respect to inspection of GA airman and medical certificates, photo identification, and aircraft certificates of registration.

Law Enforcement Authorities

If a GA pilot has crossed an international border or the legal prerequisites for border search authority are otherwise present, CBP agents and officers may border search the aircraft pursuant to long-established federal law consistent with the Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. In circumstances where border search authority or



a search warrant are not present, CBP agents and officers may conduct a search or seizure if and only to the extent otherwise consistent with the Fourth Amendment – for example, pursuant to probable cause or consent, or in the course of a protective sweep.

What to Expect During a Certificate Inspection

When conducting a certificate inspection, CBP officers and agents should identify themselves as such and they will request to see your airman and medical certificate, photo identification, and aircraft certificate of registration. The CBP officer or agent will examine and verify these documents and return them to you after completing the inspection. During



interactions with CBP personnel you should expect to be treated in a courteous, dignified, and professional manner. Given the sensitivities of law enforcement information and investigations among other considerations, CBP officers and agents may not be able to answer all of your questions. In pursuit of a shared goal, OAM and the GA community can work to stop criminals seeking to take advantage of the convenience of operating GA aircraft. To that end, we encourage all members of the GA community to call 1-866-AIRBUST (1-866-247-2878) if they notice aviation activity that is abnormal.



Privacy Protection

CBP stores all collected data in computer systems on a secure network and is committed to protecting personal data and ensuring such data is handled in a manner consistent with federal law.



Customer Service Contacts

- For more information about CBP and OAM, please visit: www.cbp.gov/border-security/air-sea
- You may contact CBP to ask a question or leave feedback at: www.cbp.gov
- Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Privacy Act Requests can be submitted online at: www.cbp.gov/foia

CBP Mission Statement

- We are the guardians of our Nation's borders.
- We are America's frontline.
- We safeguard the American homeland at and beyond our borders.
- We protect the American public against terrorists and the instruments of terror.
- We steadfastly enforce the laws of the United States while fostering our Nation's economic security through lawful international trade and travel.
- We serve the American public with vigilance, integrity, and professionalism.



Office of Air and Marine
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20229

Please visit the
U.S. Customs and Border Protection website at:
www.cbp.gov

If you observe activity that is abnormal, please call:
1-866-AIRBUST

CBP Publication Number 0202-0614

CBP and Domestic General Aviation
Office of Air and Marine

