



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20591

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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

June 26, 1970

Honorable John H. Shaffer
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
Department of Transportation
Washington, D. C. 20590

Dear Mr. Shaffer:

Federal Air Regulations do not require medical certification of glider (sailplane) pilots or student glider pilots. An applicant for a glider rating needs only to certify that he has no known physical defects that make him unable to pilot a glider.

Although most glider operations occur in isolated areas, the possibility does exist that medical incapacitation could produce accidents involving loss or damage to property and injury to innocent people. Accidents involving such damage and injury have occurred when there was no medical implication involved. It is reasonable to assume that such accidents could result from preventable, medical causes.

A user of glider services, whether he is buying instruction or flying as a passenger, should have reasonable assurance that the pilot he hires is medically safe. All other users of commercial aviation have this assurance.

Glider operations do enter the "hostile environment" of flight. Aerobatics are performed. High altitude flights, involving the use of oxygen, are flown. The glider pilot should be medically fit to cope with stresses imposed in such flying.

In view of the above, the Board recommends that applicable sections of Part 61, Federal Air Regulations, pertaining to the medical qualifications of (a) Student Pilots (61.61a(3)), (b) Private Pilots (61.81(c)), and (c) Commercial Pilots (61.111(d)), be amended to require that:

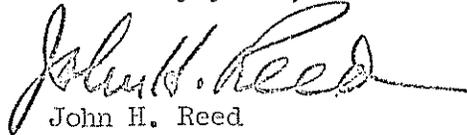
Honorable John H. Shaffer

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- (1) student pilots and private pilots, in the case of glider (sailplane) operation, hold at least a third-class medical certificate issued under Part 67, and
- (2) commercial pilots in the case of glider (sailplane) operation hold at least a second-class medical certificate issued under Part 67.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John H. Reed". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

John H. Reed
Chairman