

NAAA eNewsletter

U.S. Department of Transportation Updates Hours of Service Rules for Commercial Drivers; Many Benefits for Ag Aviation Operations

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) last week published a final rule updating hours of service (HOS) rules for commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers.

There are many changes in the final rule beneficial to commercial drivers supporting agricultural aviation operations, such as lengthening the drivers' maximum on-duty period from 12 to 14 hours and extending the short-haul distance limit within which the driver may operate from 100 air miles to 150 air miles.

The agency will also modify the adverse driving conditions exception by extending the maximum window during which driving is permitted by up to two hours. For example, while driving under the HOS rule, if unexpected adverse driving conditions slow you down, you may drive up to two extra hours to complete what could have been driven in normal conditions.

Last year, NAAA submitted [comments](#) to the FMCSA in favor of these proposals, explaining a pest will spread regardless of a driver's HOS status and a delay in the timely application of pesticides could result in the destruction of crops, or require more pesticides be used at a later time.

NAAA commented in favor of increasing the short-haul exemption from 100 to 150 miles, noting many commercial drivers supporting aerial application operations are already allowed a 150 air-mile radius that applies to agricultural operations. However, this only applies to planting and harvesting seasons determined by each state, and this rule change would bring year-round federal uniformity.

Regarding the adverse driving conditions provision, NAAA explained that while aerial applications only take place in fair weather conditions, these applications will often take place after adverse weather conditions when fields are too wet for ground spraying. In this case, the timely application of products is critical and allowing the 14-hour driving window to be extended in such cases would ensure a commercial driver is available to assist in the application.

You can read NAAA's full comments [here](#).

The FMCSA final rule can be [read here](#). You can also reference this [one-pager](#) and this [matrix](#) comparing the new rule to the old rule to learn more.

MET Towers Can't Hide Anymore in Minnesota

Yes, there really is a tower in this photo.

In a major victory for agricultural aviation, the Minnesota legislature has passed a meteorological evaluation tower (MET) marking bill endorsed by the Minnesota Agricultural Aircraft Association (MAAA). The bill is headed to Governor Walz's desk for his signature. The bill requires the following for all MET towers in Minnesota:

1. The towers must be painted with equal-width bands of solid color over its entire width, alternating between aviation orange and white.
2. At least two spherical markers must be attached to each of the highest or outside guy wires.
3. Every guy wire must have a high visibility sleeve that extends at least seven feet.
4. Have a flashing red light at the top of the tower that is compatible with night vision technology.

In addition to these MET tower requirements, the bill also requires that at least 30 days before erecting a MET tower, the owner of the tower must notify the commissioner of aeronautics of the tower and provide them with their name, contact information for tower representatives, the tower's height above ground level, elevation of the tower site, and the GPS coordinates for the center of the tower. If any of that information for a tower changes, the owner must notify the commissioner of aeronautics within 15 days. If the tower is removed, the owner must provide notification within 30 days to the commissioner of aeronautics.

The commissioner of aeronautics must maintain records for all towers covered by the bill. Information for each tower must be provided on the department's website so that the data can be used by GPS systems to denote the locations of MET towers on their maps. Existing towers have one year to comply with the regulations contained in the bill.

Many organizations were involved in bringing this victory to fruition. MAAA led the charge with assistance from Minnesota DOT Aeronautics Division, Sky Tractor, Inero Solutions and, as stated by MAAA, help from NAAA. The effort took 10 years to reach this accomplishment, but the safety these regulations will bring to agricultural aviators in Minnesota is worth the effort. NAAA congratulates MAAA. The FAA is still drafting a rule on tower marking and database logging requirements for METs and other rural towers 10 feet in

diameter or less. The bill was enacted by Congress and signed into law in 2018. Non-MET towers would have the choice of either logging towers into a database or marking the tower. METs would be required to do both. The proposed rule is expected by year's end.

2020 Ag Aviation Expo Pulse Check Survey

The 2020 NAAA **Ag Aviation Expo** is set to take place in Savannah December 7–10. We are implementing multiple attendee protections at the conference per the recommendation of health and safety officials.

With that said, we most value your perspective on attending the convention this year in Savannah. If you have not already completed the survey that you received on Tuesday, **please click here and take a few minutes to answer this short survey regarding the December Ag Aviation Expo**. We recognize your perspective may change over the next few months, but we wanted to gauge your current attitude about our event.

NAAA has created a **COVID-19 Resources webpage** to provide you with information regarding the aerial application industry and this pandemic. We appreciate your time and hope to see you in December!

Save the Date for the 2020 Ag Aviation Expo

- **Dates:** Dec. 7–10, 2020
- **Location:** Savannah Convention Center. Some events will also take place at the Westin, which is located directly next to the convention center.
- **Schedule of Events:** Current schedule **here**. Subject to change.
- **Hotel:** Hotel Details Below
- **Attendee Registration:** Opens July 1
- **Exhibitor Booth Sales:** Large booth sales and Diamond sponsorship booth sales are currently open; this includes aircraft, islands and 10'x30', 10'x10' and 10'x20' booth sales open on Thursday, July 9. Please **email Lindsay** if you'd like to be contacted regarding large booth space.
- **Sponsorship Opportunities:** Sponsorships are now available. View the **opportunities online**. Please email **Lindsay** if you would like to secure a sponsorship from last year or would like to be contacted about 2020 opportunities! We have sponsorships available for all budget sizes.
- **Auction Donations:** Thank you to Pratt & Whitney Canada for donating a PT6-34AG engine to this year's NAAA Live Auction. While we're still several months away from the Ag Aviation Expo, we are already accepting donations for the **Live and Silent Auction**. The earlier you inform us of your auction donation, the more advertising you'll receive on the NAAA website and in NAAA publications. Support the aerial application industry by donating an item today. Email **Lindsay** with your donation details.

Book Your Hotel Room

The 2020 NAAA hotel room block is coordinated through Visit Savannah, which is the Savannah Area Convention & Visitors Bureau Housing office. **Please do not call the hotels directly; use the link and/or phone number below to book your room.** Rooms are available at the Westin Savannah Harbor (directly next to the convention center), Hyatt Regency Savannah and Savannah Marriott Riverfront hotels (across the river from the convention center and Westin – transportation provided). All room blocks close Nov. 13 at 5 p.m. ET.

- **Westin Savannah Harbor:** \$150/night plus taxes
 - **Westin Cancellation:** For each reservation cancelled after Oct. 30, 2020, a nonrefundable one night room + tax will be charged to the credit card on file. Guests who check out early (prior to the reserved check out date) will be assessed one full night's room charge plus taxes.
- **Hyatt Regency Savannah:** \$148/night plus taxes
- **Savannah Marriott Riverfront:** \$142/night plus taxes

All room rates above are single/double occupancy and do not include taxes.

Book your room today by clicking **here**, call the housing bureau at (912) 644-6465 or email **reservations@visitsavannah.com**. Please note reservations are taken over the phone Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. If you cannot call during those hours, please email your reservations details or book your room online **here**.

Ag Aviation Expo Sponsorships Available

Join us for the 2020 **Ag Aviation Expo** in Savannah, Dec. 7–10! Take advantage of getting your company name in front of the expected 1,500+ operators, ag pilots and other attendees directly related to the agricultural aviation industry through an Ag Aviation Expo sponsorship.

Five reasons why you should be a sponsor at the 2020 NAAA Ag Aviation Expo:

- A targeted audience will see your company's name and/or logo.
- Sponsorship enhances your company's credibility and rapport.
- You will gain brand awareness and recognition.
- You will generate new sales and/or leads and potential business partnerships.
- You can drive attendees to your booth and message through your sponsorship.

According to a post-convention survey, 75 percent of aerial applicators stated that they would be “very likely” to use the products and services of a company that sponsors an event at the Ag Aviation Expo. View [sponsorship opportunities here](#).

By becoming a sponsor, attendees will:

- Remember your company, services and products.
- See you as a supporter of the ag aviation industry.
- Recognize your brand.
- See you as a partner and industry visionary.
- Hold you above others in purchasing decisions.

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Book your room today by clicking [here](#), call the housing bureau at (912) 644-6465 or email reservations@visitsavannah.com. Please note reservations are taken over the phone Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. If you cannot call during those hours, please email your reservations details or book your room online [here](#).

Complimentary Transportation & River Taxis

Getting across the river is quick and easy thanks to the free ferry service that will shuttle attendees back and forth throughout the day and evening. The Savannah Belles Ferry provides water transportation from the Hyatt and the Marriott to the convention center and Westin hotel. The trip takes five to 10 minutes, and ferry service will be continual during convention hours; schedule will be available onsite. Free shuttle bus service is also available for those who are not comfortable on the water.

Want to Win Thousands in Educational Scholarships? Enter Our Support Scholarship Contest!

Attention, higher-education students: Don't miss out on the opportunity to compete for a combined \$3,000 in educational scholarships. The deadline for the 2020 [Support Scholarship Essay Contest](#) is Sept. 15. The NAAA Support Committee will award a \$2,000 scholarship as top prize and Covington Aircraft Engines has generously agreed to sponsor a \$1,000 scholarship.

The theme for this year's contest is **“Why is Agricultural Aviation Important?”** The scholarship is not restricted to pursuing a “flying career.” Any educational pursuit beyond high school (at any age) is eligible. The competition is open to all NAAA members and their family members.

Entrants must be a senior in high school or be registered in higher education by the fall semester of 2020. Previous winners are not eligible to compete. Submissions must be an essay of at least 1,500 words or a 5-minute multi-media presentation. Submissions should be sent as an email attachment by Sept. 15 to information@agaviation.org. More information about eligibility requirements, contest guidelines and sample essays from past scholarship recipients are available online [here](#).

NAAA's 'Ag Wings of Tomorrow' Scholarship is Back with \$20K Available in '20

Attention, operators and aspiring ag pilots: The NAAA "Ag Wings of Tomorrow" Scholarship is back! Thanks to the generous support of BASF and Thrush Aircraft, \$20,000 in aid is available via the **2020 NAAA "Ag Wings of Tomorrow" Scholarship Program** to assist four aspiring ag pilots in their journey.

The goal of NAAA's "Ag Wings of Tomorrow" Scholarship Program is to strengthen the aerial application industry by helping operator members bring new pilots into the profession and help fund their training. Applicants must be sponsored by an NAAA Operator member, and scholarship recipients may use the proceeds for flight training or aviation or ag-related coursework at a university, college, community college or other institution of higher learning. A stipend for a trainee in an NAAA Operator-sponsored apprentice program is also permissible. The scholarship program is administered by NAAA and funded by educational grants provided by BASF and Thrush.

This year, NAAA will award up to four scholarships valued at \$5,000 each. This is a win-win for NAAA Operator members and individuals seeking training funds to support their pursuit of becoming a professional ag pilot.

NAAA awarded \$5,000 scholarships to four aspiring ag pilots at the 2019 Ag Aviation Expo. From L–R, NAAA "Ag Wings of Tomorrow" Scholarship recipients Caleb Swanson, Raudel Mendoza, Liam Zahm and Jacob Radermacher.

How to Apply

To be considered for the 2020 scholarship, along with completing the **two-part application**, every applicant must submit:

- **A letter of recommendation** from the NAAA Operator member sponsoring the applicant.
- **An essay of 250 words or less** explaining why you want to pursue a career in agricultural aviation and how you would use NAAA's "Ag Wings of Tomorrow" Scholarship to further your education and training.
- **A one-page résumé or list of activities** detailing all agricultural and aviation experiences, education and training.

NAAA will award the recipients of the 2020 "Ag Wings of Tomorrow" Scholarships in December at the Ag Aviation Expo in Savannah. Last year NAAA awarded \$5,000 scholarships to four young individuals who represent the future of ag aviation: Raudel Mendoza of Sunray, Texas, Jacob Radermacher of Shipshewana, Indiana, Caleb Swanson of Canton, South Dakota, and Liam Zahm of Marne, Michigan.

To learn more about the 2020 NAAA "Ag Wings of Tomorrow" Scholarship, please review the instructions included with the **2020 application**. Please contact NAAA at (202) 546-5722 or information@agaviation.org for clarification about any of the application requirements.

While the applicant must be sponsored by an NAAA Operator member, NAAA membership is not a prerequisite for the person applying for the scholarship. Becoming an **NAAA Associate member**, however, is a great way for candidates to learn more about the industry and augment their training.

The deadline to apply for the 2020 "Ag Wings of Tomorrow" Scholarship is Aug. 31.