



LSA Myths & Misconceptions

by Carol Ceccone Carpenter

It has been a little over 8 years since the effective date of the Sport Pilot rule, yet, still today there are many mistaken beliefs about the regulations regarding maintenance and inspections of these aircraft. The rules are confusing and the misinformation propagated in the industry is abundant. Here we will list ten of the most common myths and misconceptions about Light Sport maintenance requirements.

Myth 1: My aircraft is an experimental and meets the definition of a Light Sport Aircraft (LSA) and I am flying it as a Sport Pilot – therefore it is an E-LSA



Reality: Under the Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs) any aircraft that meets the definition of a light-sport aircraft as called out in FAR Part 1.1 is eligible to be operated by a sport pilot. These aircraft can be certificated in any category,

such as standard, experimental amateur-built, experimental exhibition, experimental light-sport aircraft (E-LSA), or special light-sport aircraft (S-LSA). However- the maintenance requirements follow the category of certification.

If your aircraft is experimental and the second line on your airworthiness certificate says "amateur- built," your aircraft is simply light sport eligible.

This means you may fly it as a sport pilot, but maintenance and inspection regulations remain the same. You may perform maintenance on the aircraft, however, you must be the original builder or an airframe and powerplant (A & P) mechanic to perform the yearly inspections.

Myth 2: My buddy and I own an E-LSA and only one of us can take the 2 day repairman course and be issued a Repairman Certificate to perform the yearly condition inspection.

Reality: There is no limit to how many individuals may hold a repairman certificate for an E-LSA. If a group of six, say, buy an ELSA- all six may take the 2 day repairman course and hold the repairman certificate as part owners. When the aircraft sells, the next owner may take the 2 day repairman course and also be issued a repairman certificate. However, the original owner may no longer perform inspections on the aircraft. Unlike amateur-built ownership of the aircraft is a requirement.

Myth 3: I must hold the Rotax Factory Training Certificate to perform any service or maintenance on my Rotax engine.

Reality: Only the FAA may issue certification for aircraft inspection and maintenance. Further, anyone may perform service and maintenance on an experimental aircraft whether it is amateur built or light sport. For Standard category or



S-LSA, the technician must have had training- but that training does not have to be Rotax Factory Training. Certainly, any aircraft owner will benefit from the excellent Rotax Factory training, but it is not required by regulation.

Myth 4: A mandatory service bulletin means I must comply.

Reality: The only mandatory notices for S-LSA, from an FAA regulatory perspective, are safety directives and ADs; both are mandatory. Only ADs are required for standard category aircraft.

Myth 5: After completing my E-LSA kit, which is based on an S-LSA, I must follow the manufacturer's mandates regarding maintenance and modification.



Reality: At the time of certification, the E-LSA kit must be a mirror image of the manufacturer's S-LSA, however immediately after certification the aircraft may be modified and there is no requirement for manufacturer's approval for repairs or modifications. However, the aircraft must continue to meet the definition called out in FAR Part 1.1 for light sport aircraft. You could not, for example, modify the aircraft by adding an in-flight adjustable propeller. You should, of course, exercise caution against making any modifications to the structure of the aircraft without the approval of the designer. Remember, there are many things that are legal, but are not wise.

Myth 6: As an S-LSA owner, as long as I have taken the Rotax service and maintenance course, I may perform line maintenance on my aircraft engine.

Reality: Only a LSRM or an A & P may perform maintenance on an S-LSA. An owner may perform preventative maintenance, such as

oil changes as called out in the manufacturer's manual - without any FAA requirement to receive formal training.

Myth 7: I can change the weight of an experimental amateur-built aircraft, which I built and have been flying, so it meets the 1,320-pound limit for light sport aircraft.

Reality: Any aircraft certificated as amateur built, or even standard category, must have, since its original certification, continued to meet the light sport aircraft definition. If the aircraft has flown one time outside that definition- it is no longer light sport eligible.



Myth 8: I must build 51% of my Experimental Light Sport Aircraft kit.

Reality: There is no requirement for any percentage of required build on an E-LSA kit. In fact, you can hire a professional to completely build the aircraft for you. Or you might order a "kit" which is 99% complete with your portion of the build consisting of installing the various placards. Some of our LSRMs actually offer their services to build E-LSA kits for hire.

Myth 9: I must own an aircraft to attend the 2 day Repairman course and earn a certificate.



Reality: You do not have to own an aircraft to take either the 2 day course or the three week course. The training may be taken by anyone and, in fact, these courses are an excellent first step to aircraft ownership. The certificate does not expire. When you do purchase

an E-LSA in the future you may use it to apply for the Repairman certification. Likewise, there is no requirement to own an aircraft to attend the three week course. In this class, ownership is not required to receive your FAA certification and moreover, the attendee need not even be a pilot.

Myth 10: I will be the oldest attendee in the three week course.

Reality: While the course is an excellent option for a young person interested in building a career, the majority of attendees are over 55. Some are planning second careers; others are S-LSA owners interested in performing their own maintenance and inspections. The oldest attendee in our 3 week course was 84 at the time he attended.

We invite you to call or email us if you need any additional information or if you have any questions.

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