

COPA Works to End Future Border Crossing Frustrations

By Patrick Gilligan, COPA v-p of operations

In previous articles (April 2014 www.multibriefs.com/briefs/copa/eFlight_Borderredtape.pdf and August 2014 www.multibriefs.com/briefs/copa/081414.html) I alerted members to the development of an additional procedure being developed by the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) for crossing the Canadian/U.S. border.

This update is a report on recent developments as COPA continues to work with Canadian and U.S. officials to find a solution that both addresses their goals and minimizes duplication.

COPA is heavily involved in finding creative solutions to minimize the detrimental consequences that any additional requirements have on our sector of aviation.

I would like to emphasize that no changes have been made to the existing requirements. Any change to the requirements for crossing the border in a GA aircraft will, at the earliest, occur sometime in 2016.

COPA is working directly with key CBSA staff, not only at formal meetings but also whenever possible to help educate them on issues and to explore options. Most recently, a meeting was held in Washington, DC, hosted by AOPA U.S., in which we managed to get CBSA officials at the same table with their counterparts at the U.S. Customs and Border Protection agency (CBP) to explore options.

In addition to the government agencies, representatives attended from the Experimental Aircraft Association, the National Air Transport Association, the General Aircraft Manufacturers Association and National Business Aviation Association. COPA President Kevin Psutka and I were also in attendance. This meeting was a follow-on meeting from one held in Oshkosh in July during AirVenture at which Association representatives, including Kevin Psutka, scoped out the issues and set the stage for a meeting with government officials in an effort to reduce the burden of crossing the border.

The Mexican government is considered a player in reducing cross border issues so they were also invited to attend the Washington meeting. However, at the last minute they declined to attend.

COPA emphasized that the fundamental issue is the elimination of duplication. Since all pilots must complete the U.S. eAPIS reports for entering and exiting the U.S., it would be a relatively simple extension for the U.S. to send information to Canada for their security purposes.

CBSA officials continue to collaborate with our sector, while at the same time respecting the Government of Canada's Privacy rules and policies, which make the work more challenging. The Washington meeting succeeded in convincing the CBSA that their U.S. counterparts are willing to cooperate.

COPA will continue to participate in the ongoing working group meetings as well as with our counterparts in the U.S. in an effort to develop a program that both meets our government's needs and minimizes the impact on our sector of aviation.

More information about CBSA's initiative visit:

www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/agency-agence/actreg-loireg/frp-ppr/19-eng.html