

AVIATION SAFETY IN COCHISE COUNTY

08 Nov 07

It has recently been brought to my attention that there is some misunderstanding in our aviation community, and perhaps in our community as a whole, as to the role and authority therein of what the FAA calls a FAASTeam (FAA Safety Team) Representative. In our region, these volunteers work under the FAASTeam Program Manager, Mr. Mike Halloran, out of the FAA FSDO (Flight Standards District Office) in Scottsdale.

Some civilians in our community, and even some of our pilots, may have gotten the false impression that these volunteers, the FAASTeam Representatives, are acting as agents for the FAA with the authority to demand information and threaten or discipline a pilot. This is not a part of the FAAST Program and if it were so would totally undermine what the FAAST was set up to do. As volunteers, after taking the training required by the FAA to serve as FAASTeam Representatives, these FAASTeam Representatives are issued a photo ID from the FAA. But, as that training and the paperwork they had to sign emphasized and stated ... "I understand that if appointed as a Representative or other volunteer position that appointment does not make me an employee or agent of the Federal Aviation Administration." In fact the job of a FAASTeam Representative is to help organize safety briefings and seminars as established by both the National and eight local Regional FAASTeams concerning accident/incident reports, hazards identified by local Flight Standards District Offices, and information from the local aviation community involving airmen. The job also entails working with local organizations and individuals, using a soft touch, to try to educate them before problems become enforceable actions or accidents. As Mr. Halloran has emphasized to me ... "our FAASTeam Representatives are not to be snoops for the FAA." These volunteers do not have nor should they wish to have the authority to enforce or threaten to enforce any FAA rule or regulation.

So, no matter where you fly in this wide country, if an individual acting in their capacity as a FAASTeam Representative should approach you, present his or her ID, and offer advice as to how to be a better user of our airspace or a better pilot, graciously accept it in the manner it is being presented. Treat it as information coming from a Flight Instructor at Large and not as if from an enforcement cop on the beat. If for any reason you feel you are being mistreated by this individual or that they may have overstepped their guidelines contact the local FSDO immediately and advise the FAASTeam Program Manager of your encounter with one of his FAASTeam Representatives. To find out more about the FAAST program go to www.faasafety.gov and check it out. There is a lot of important information available there. Mike Halloran is available at (480) 419 0111 ext 255 at the FAA's FSDO in Scottsdale.

George W. Clarke, III
ATP MEL, Commercial/Instrument,
SEL/SES, IGI, AGI, A&P, NBD
Hangar C
Libby Army Airfield (FHU)
Sierra Vista, AZ
(520) 459 0012