

FAA will clarify kitplane rules

THE US FEDERAL Aviation Administration is drawing up guidelines which will clarify the rules governing the assembly and approval of kit-built aircraft. The move follows concern that amateur-built rules were being circumvented by some "builder-assist" shops set up to help kit buyers complete their aircraft.

The FAA emphasises that it is happy with the amateur-built programme, which requires buyers to perform the "major portion" (usually interpreted as 51%) of the work required to complete the aircraft to qualify for experimental-category approval. Proof is required in the form of a log book, with photographs, detailing the assembly process.

The entry into the market of more-sophisticated kitplanes, which appeal to a broader audience but are beyond the capabilities of many first-time builders, has led to the emergence of builder-assist shops. The FAA says that most of these legitimately provide hangar space, tooling and tuition to kit builders, but some have been completing the aircraft.

Mike Gallagher, manager of the FAA's production and airworthiness division, says that the agency wants to prevent kit buyers being misled into believing that they can gain FAA approval for an aircraft which has been completed professionally. The FAA also wants to stamp out the practice of applicants seeking amateur-built approval with faked log books.

Guidelines to be available early in 1995 will provide FAA regional offices responsible for approving amateur-built aircraft with clearer guidance, Gallagher says. □

NEWS IN BRIEF

DEGREE OF LEARNING

Raytheon Aircraft has delivered a Beech King Air B200 to Indiana-based Purdue University for use as a teaching laboratory. The company will also supply engineering data and a B200 cockpit to allow Purdue to develop a King Air simulator.

Bede hands over BD-10 manufacture to Peregrine

GRAHAM WARWICK/ATLANTA

BEDE JET has licensed the rights to certificate, manufacture and market its BD-10 single-turbojet general-aviation aircraft to Peregrine Flight International, the Nevada-based company formed to help buyers of the BD-10 kitplane build their aircraft.

Kit shipments have been halted while Peregrine studies the requirements for US Part 23 certification of the two-seat BD-10, Bede says. A team of certification engineers, organised by the US Small Aircraft Manufacturer's Association, will present a certification plan in mid-January, says Peregrine executive vice-president Charles Miller.

Plans call for the BD-10, renamed the Peregrine Falcon, to be certificated by late 1996. The aircraft will be priced at between \$1.4 million and \$1.6 million and Peregrine will be "happy" to sell 15 to 20 a year, says Miller. The target market will be wealthy individuals seeking a high-performance aircraft.

Peregrine is the parent company of Fox Aircraft, which was formed to assist builders of the BD-10 kitplane. One customer aircraft has been completed at Fox and two more are under construction. The company is also working on four



BD-10 shipments have stopped as Peregrine works on certification plans

sales demonstrators and five aircraft for the Peregrine Falcon Jet Demonstration Team, which plans to begin displays in 1996.

The first company example was being prepared for flight trials in mid-December, to test the pressurisation system and expand the flight envelope from 280kt (520km/h) to 410kt, to clear the aircraft to its planned maximum Mach number of 0.94. The certification-test aircraft will be completed in mid-February 1995, Miller says, and will incorporate

several design improvements.

Bede says that the BD-10 was launched as a kitplane to establish its viability and to determine market response. Peregrine says that enthusiasm was high, but the market was limited because of the time required to complete the kit.

The certification programme was launched, Miller says, because of concern that some kit buyers would be tempted to circumvent US amateur-built rules by having their aircraft completed professionally. □

London firefighters assess helicopters

THE LONDON FIRE Brigade (LFB) in the UK is considering whether to use helicopters in emergency operations.

Tenders are being invited for a study contract to evaluate whether a helicopter could be useful. Depending on the results, an operational trial may follow.

The Brigade says that it has so far identified only the Eurocopter BK.117 C-1 Plus as being suitable, but one of the contractor's tasks will be to recommend types.

LFB officer Jeff McCall

explains: "We are not looking at using a helicopter to replace pumping appliances. What we are looking at is the idea that we can support front-line appliances by deploying specialist personnel and equipment as soon as the need is identified at an incident."

An LFB report to the London Fire and Civil Defence Authority notes that growing traffic congestion and "traffic-calming" measures "severely affect" the Brigade's deployment capability.

It says that there is a particular

need for specialist equipment at incidents involving underground construction; salvage and damage control; and traffic accidents where fire or chemicals are present, as well as other situations.

The London Metropolitan Police already has Bell 222s and the city's Helicopter Emergency Medical Service uses a Eurocopter Dauphin. McCall says that the Brigade has looked at joint use of helicopters with the other services, but its unique equipment needs make that impracticable. □