



Pilot Mental Health: Is TC Ready to Adopt FAA’s Game-Changing Recommendations?

Fellow Professional Pilot,

Back in February of 2024, we queried TC as to their position and future plans related to the hot issue of pilot mental health. Specifically, we asked about measures and initiatives TC is planning to implement to encourage pilots to come forth and self-report without fear of punitive actions. Our letter, and their reply, is available on the documents page of the website, on the member-side (log in required).

Ultimately, in their closing remarks, TC reported they were an invited observer to the FAA's Aviation Rulemaking Committee (ARC), which was drafting recommendations specifically aimed at reducing barriers preventing pilots from seeking care for or disclosing mental health issues. As has been historically the case when TC sees changes made by the FAA, TC indicated that they will review the FAA ARC recommendations and see if any are applicable to the Canadian industry.

The FAA report came into being in April and is now available to the public [here](#).

Of the 24 recommendations, it remains to be seen if any are adopted by TC and eventually implemented. Fitness to fly is a professional and personal responsibility, and therefore one recommendation we are particularly interested in is the removal of the requirement to disclose undergoing psychotherapy counselling.

In keeping with our role, we will be following up with TC for more information now that some time has passed since publication. Of particular concern is how much more TC's resources will be strained if/as any recommendations are adopted. TC was quick to point out that it was leading amongst aviation regulators in certifying applicants with otherwise disqualifying medical conditions on a case-by-base basis, a stance that at the very least anecdotal evidence seems to disprove.

The College of Professional Pilots position remains that real or perceived inefficiencies and delays at the regulator, and throughout the civil aviation medical system, presents a major deterrent in self-reporting, and to pilots seeking the help they need. This is not only on the mental health front but for physical ailments as well. A more accountable and transparent presentation of processing times and overall pending files might help anchor realities and reset counter-productive narratives.

Personal circumstances change throughout a career, and given present-day realities, as well as the nature of the Canadian flying landscape, it is conceivable that more of us will face life changes and challenges that would benefit from a more open, proactive, and expedient handling of mental and physical health-related decisions. Ideally, we would work to improve the state of the profession and other aspects of our industry so that stressors linked with a more vulnerable state of mental health are minimized.

The CPPC will continue to raise awareness, and continue the dialogue with our regulator to ensure there is progress and improvement as a result of developments at our neighbours, the FAA rule making.

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