

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Aviation Administration
Boston Flight Standards District Office
Civil Air Terminal, Bldg 15
Bedford, Massachusetts 01730-2616
781-272-7130, Fax: 781-274-6725

January 17, 2001

Dear Mr. Christman: Aerobatic Flights

During the past year our office has received an increasing amount of complaints from residents in Ayer, Groton and Westford, Massachusetts, among others, who are very concerned about aerobatic activity in the airspace over and around their residences. Inspectors in this office are aware that the majority of aircraft and the pilots involved in the aerobatic activity are not in violation of any Federal Aviation Regulations. However, we are placed in the unenviable position of trying to calm an extremely irate and in some cases very hostile citizen on a recurring basis.

The complaints normally range from the threat of political action to stop all aerobatic activity to more extreme cases, where veiled threats to learn the identity of the pilots involved are conveyed. Normally, our message to the complainants is that of peaceful coexistence. We try to point out that the flights do not pose a risk to their safety. Their belief is that they should be able to enjoy the privacy of their home and property without the sound of screaming propellers overhead from dawn to dusk on each weekend that the sun shines. We believe that both arguments have merit and would like to see some type of compromise to the problem.

We are attempting to contact as many pilots as possible in order to make them aware of the ongoing situation. We would like to solicit your advice to help reach a lasting solution to this problem.

Inspectors of this office have scheduled a meeting to take place on Wednesday, February 7, 2001, at the Boston FSDO located on the second floor in the Hanscom Field Civil Air Terminal. The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. Please mark this date on your calendar and make a sincere effort to attend. This is a time when many General Aviation airports are being closed or are facing extreme scrutiny from the non-flying public. We need your input to reach a viable solution for all parties involved. Your knowledge and expertise are welcome. Refreshments will be served.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please call Operations Supervisor Ed Reinecker or myself at the FSDO for additional details at (781) 274-7130.

Sincerely,
William D. Wicks Aviation Safety Inspector