

## Part IV: Airports and Aeronautical Users

### Chapter 11. Self-Service

#### 11.1 General.

The sponsor of a federally obligated airport must permit airport aeronautical users, including air carriers, the right to self-service and to use any of the airport's Fixed-Base Operators (FBOs).<sup>1</sup>

#### 11.2 Restrictions on Self-Servicing Aircraft.

[Grant Assurance 22\(f\), Economic Nondiscrimination](#), provides that a sponsor "will not exercise or grant any right or privilege which operates to prevent any person, firm, or corporation operating aircraft on the airport from performing any services on its own aircraft with its own employees (including, but not limited to, maintenance, repair, and self-fueling)<sup>2</sup> that it may choose to perform." (See Appendix H, *Explanation of Terms*, for the definitions of Self-fueling and Self-service).

The FAA considers the right to self-service as prohibiting the establishment of any unreasonable restriction on the owners or operators of aircraft regarding the servicing of their own aircraft and equipment.

Aircraft owners and operators must be permitted to tie down, adjust, refuel, clean, perform self-service repair and preventative maintenance, and otherwise take care of their own aircraft, provided that they or their employees perform these tasks. The sponsor is obligated to operate the airport in a safe and efficient manner. The sponsor should establish reasonable rules and standards, and the aircraft owner or operator must conduct self-servicing in accordance with those rules and standards for such work.

The establishment of reasonable rules, applied in a not unjustly discriminatory manner, that restrict the introduction of equipment, personnel, or practices that would be unsafe, detrimental to the public welfare, or that would affect the efficient use of airport facilities by others, will not be considered a violation of [Grant Assurance 22\(f\), Economic Nondiscrimination](#).

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<sup>1</sup> A Fixed-Base Operator (FBO) is a commercial entity providing multiple aeronautical services such as fueling, maintenance, storage, ground and flight instruction, etc., to the public.

<sup>2</sup> For information regarding preventative maintenance, refer to [Advisory Circular \(AC\) 43-12A, Preventative Maintenance](#). For information regarding fueling, refer to [Advisory Circular \(AC\) 150/5230-4C, Aircraft Fuel Storage, Handling, and Dispensing on Airports](#).

### 11.3 Permitted Activities.

Generally, the following activities are permitted by an aircraft owner or operator, including but not limited to individuals, air carriers, air taxis, corporate flight departments, charter operators, and flight schools so long as the activities are conducted in accordance with local, state, and federal health, safety, and environmental regulations:

- (a) Perform its own self-fueling activities, including bringing fuel to the airport to include ethanol-free premium automotive gasoline and other approved fuels, with its own employees in conformance with the sponsor's rules and regulations pertaining to self-service operations. (See Appendix D, *Sample Airport Rules and Regulations*. **NOTE:** Information in samples is for example only).
- (b) Perform self-service on the owner or operator's own aircraft, including ground handling, servicing, painting, and cleaning.
- (c) Use its own sources for parts and supplies.
- (d) Perform self-service maintenance in accordance with [14 CFR part 43, \*Maintenance, Preventive Maintenance, Rebuilding, and Alteration\*](#), and [Advisory Circular \(AC\) 43-12A, \*Preventative Maintenance\*](#).
  - (1) A general aviation aircraft owner or operator may perform the activities listed in the definition of preventive maintenance in paragraph (c) of Appendix A to 14 CFR part 43. A general aviation aircraft owner or operator may also perform aircraft restoration, major repairs, and alterations if the owner or operator performing those actions holds an appropriate certificate under [14 CFR part 65, \*Certification: Airmen Other Than Flight Crewmembers\*](#), as required by Part 43.
  - (2) The holder of an operating certificate issued under parts 121 or 135 may perform maintenance, preventive maintenance, and alterations on its own aircraft with its own employees, as provided in parts 121 or 135 respectively.
  - (3) The holder of a sport pilot certificate who owns or operates a light sport category aircraft may perform preventive maintenance on that light sport category aircraft.
  - (4) The owner or operator of an aircraft for which an experimental certificate has been issued may perform maintenance, repair, and alteration of the aircraft if the owner or operator holds an experimental aircraft repairman certificate for the aircraft.

#### 11.4 Contracting to a Third Party.

Self-service activities generally cannot be contracted out to a third party. Self-service activities must be performed by the owner or employees of the entity involved. Where third-party contracting of self-servicing activities is proposed for aircraft under long-term lease, the airport sponsor should request clarifying information to confirm that sufficient interest in and control over the aircraft is maintained. Airport sponsors should also confirm that the aircraft operator retains sufficient control over third-party contracted employees for the purposes of self-servicing. Airport sponsors may not allow third-party contracting of self-service activities where the owner/operator of the aircraft does not retain ultimate control over contracted personnel, including interviewing, hiring, assigning duties, and termination of the employee assigned to the aircraft. The FAA may, upon request, assist the airport sponsor in evaluating sufficient control for the purposes of evaluating self-servicing by a contracted third party.<sup>3</sup>

#### 11.5 Restricted Service Activities.

The sponsor may require an aircraft owner or operator to:

- (a) Observe reasonable rules and regulations pertaining to self-service operations, including local fire safety and federal and/or state environmental requirements.<sup>4</sup>
- (b) Perform aircraft maintenance, painting, and fueling operations in appropriate locations using appropriate equipment. (For information regarding fueling, refer to [AC 150/5230-4C, Aircraft Fuel Storage, Handling, and Dispensing on Airports](#)).
- (c) Limit equipment, personnel, or practices that are unsafe, or detrimental to the public welfare or that would affect the efficient use of airport facilities by others.
- (d) Pay the same fuel flowage fees that the sponsor charges providers selling fuel to the public. This practice alleviates the potential for claims of unjust discrimination.

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<sup>3</sup> Self-servicing of aircraft regulated by [14 CFR part 91 subpart K, Fractional Ownership Operations](#), are addressed at paragraph 11.10 *Fractional Aircraft Ownership Programs*.

<sup>4</sup> [FAA Order 1050.15C, Fuel Storage Tanks at FAA Facilities](#), dated October 17, 2024, establishes agency policy, procedures, responsibilities, and implementation guidelines to comply with regulations pertaining to Underground Storage Tanks (UST) of the Federal Aviation Administration as required by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (42 U.S.C. § 6901 et seq.), as amended by the Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments of 1984 (Pub. L. 98-616) and other acts, and as implemented by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Underground Storage Tanks; Technical Requirements and State Program Approval; Final Rules regulation, 40 CFR parts 280 and 281.

## 11.6 Reasonable Rules and Regulations.

The sponsor should design its self-service rules and regulations to ensure safe operations, preservation of facilities, and the protection of the public interest. Examples of such rules and regulations may include:

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Aircraft owners or operators, including individuals, air carriers, air taxis, corporate flight departments, charter operators, and flight schools should conduct activities in accordance with the local, state, and federal health, safety and environmental regulations.

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- (a) Confining the use of paints, dopes, and thinners to structures that meet appropriate safety and environmental criteria.
- (b) Establishing safe practices for storing and transporting fuel.
- (c) Restricting hangars to related aeronautical activities.
- (d) Placing restrictions on the use of solvents to protect sewage and drainage facilities.
- (e) Establishing weight limitations on vehicles and equipment to protect airport roads and paving, including limits on delivery trucks, fuel trucks, and construction equipment.
- (f) Setting time limits on the open storage of nonairworthy aircraft, wreckage, and major components.<sup>5</sup>
- (g) Maintaining minimum requirements for taxiing an aircraft, e.g., a requirement to hold an FAA pilot, mechanic, repairman light sport repairman, or experimental aircraft repairman certificate.
- (h) Setting requirements for escorting passengers and controlling vehicular access.
- (i) Requiring certain regulations that mirror FAA regulations. Requirements inconsistent with FAA regulations may not be reasonable. For example, requiring a pilot license or medical certificate as a condition for self-servicing aircraft is inconsistent with 14 CFR part 61 (*i.e.*, an aircraft owner is not required to be a licensed pilot or to hold a medical certificate). The aircraft pilot or operator would have to meet FAA licensing requirements. The aircraft owner must simply own the aircraft to self-service it.

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<sup>5</sup> See *BMI Salvage Corporation and Blueside Services, Inc. v. Miami-Dade County Florida*, No. 16-05-16 (July 25, 2006), Final Agency Decision *aff'd* on remand pp. 46-47 (April 15, 2011).

- (j) Defining permitted locations for maintenance engine runups or otherwise operating an aircraft with no intent to taxi.

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An airport sponsor is under no obligation to permit aircraft owners to introduce equipment, personnel, or practices that would be unsafe, or detrimental to the public welfare.

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### **11.7 Restrictions Based on Safety and Location.**

An airport sponsor is under no obligation to permit aircraft owners to introduce onto the airport any equipment, personnel, or practices that would be unsafe, or detrimental to the public welfare or that would affect the efficient use of airport facilities by others. Reasonable rules and regulations should be adopted to confine aircraft maintenance and fueling operations to appropriate locations with equipment commensurate to the job being done. In addition, aircraft owners that are subtenants of an airport tenant, such as an FBO, may not be able to self-fuel on the tenant or FBO premises without the approval of the airport owner and tenant. However, the subtenant may be directed by the airport owner to an alternative location on the airport to self-fuel.

### **11.8 Activities Not Classified as Self-service.**

Activities not classified as self-service include servicing aircraft and parts for others, providing parts and supplies to others, receiving services and supplies from fuel Cooperative Organizations (CO-OPs), and delivery of fuel to owners or operators by off-airport suppliers.

### **11.9 Sponsor Self-service Prerogatives.**

#### **a. Minimum Standards and Rules and Regulations.**

A sponsor may establish reasonable minimum standards and airport rules and regulations to be followed when conducting self-service operations, including specifying equipment and personnel training requirements. Where an owner or operator does not have the equipment or personnel to meet the sponsor's self-service requirements, the sponsor may deny the owner or operator the opportunity to perform the specific self-service activity. In such cases, the FAA will not find the sponsor in violation of its grant assurances regarding self-service operations. In other words, the fact that a particular operator cannot meet requirements that the FAA finds reasonable does not constitute a violation of federal obligations on the part of the sponsor. The sponsor's self-service rules and regulations, when established specific for its airport, will support and ensure safe operations, preservation of facilities, and protection of the public interest.

**b. Fuel Cooperative Organizations (CO-OPs).**

An airport sponsor is not required to permit a CO-OP to self-serve. If a sponsor does permit CO-OPs to self-serve, the CO-OP will have to observe the same minimum standards and rules and regulations applicable to all self-service activities. In addition, if self-fueling is allowed for CO-OPs, the sponsor may require the CO-OP to demonstrate joint ownership of the fuel tank and the fuel. The sponsor may also require the CO-OP to document that all personnel involved in fueling operations are adequately trained and that self-fueling is conducted only for that CO-OP business partner for which the employee actually works.

**c. Ethanol-free Automotive Gasoline.**

When an owner or operator obtains a certificate that authorizes it to fuel with ethanol-free premium automotive gasoline, the sponsor may impose the same rules and regulations on that owner or operator as it imposes on the airport's other self-service operations. The requirements must be reasonable for the operation.

**d. Flying Club.**

When an organization claims self-service status by virtue of its status as a flying club, the sponsor may hold the organization to the same rules and regulations that it established for its other self-service operations.<sup>6</sup>

**11.10 Fractional Aircraft Ownership Programs.****a. Summary.**

The regulatory definitions and safety standards for fractional ownership programs are established in [14 CFR part 91 subpart K](#). This regulation defines the program elements, allocates operational control responsibilities and authority to the owners and program manager, and provides increased operational and maintenance safety requirements for fractional ownership programs. (Additional requirements can be found in [14 CFR part 91 subpart F](#)).

**b. Background.**

The fractional ownership concept began in 1986 with the creation of an industry program that offered increased flexibility in aircraft ownership and operation. This

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<sup>6</sup> See also, *Petition of the Aircraft Owner and Pilots Association (AOPA) To Amend FAA Policy Concerning Flying Club Operations at Federally Obligated Airports*, 81 Fed. Reg. 13719 (February 9, 2016).

program used existing aircraft acquisition concepts, including shared aircraft ownership, with the aircraft being managed by an aircraft management company.

The aircraft owners participating in the program purchase a minimum share of an aircraft, share that specific aircraft with others having an ownership interest in that aircraft, and participate in a lease aircraft exchange program with other owners in the program. The aircraft owners use a common management company to maintain the aircraft, to administer aircraft leasing among the owners, and to provide other aviation expertise and professional management services. Flight Standards Service definitions and policies on fractional ownership are summarized in [AC 91-84, \*Fractional Ownership Programs\*](#).

**c. Policy.**

FAA has found companies engaged in fractional ownership operations under Part 91 subpart K to be aircraft owners for purposes of the self-service provisions of [Grant Assurance 22\(f\), \*Economic Nondiscrimination\*](#), and entitled to self-fuel fractionally owned aircraft, as well as to perform other self-service functions.

**11.11 Air Carriers.**

Self-service requirements for air carrier operations (*i.e.*, [14 CFR part 121, \*Operating Requirements: Domestic, Flag, and Supplemental Operations\*](#)) may present additional issues which may differ or impact the applicability of certain concepts which are normally acceptable for general aviation. Air carrier operations may involve aircraft leasing terms which vary significantly from one carrier to another and may involve fueling arrangements normally not found in other types of operations.

**11.12 through 11.16 Reserved.**