



Memorandum

To: All FFI Cardholders and Aspiring Formation Pilots

From: Bob Mills, FFI President

Date: March 7, 2018

Re: 2018 FFI INFORMATION BULLETIN

FFI Check Pilots, Flight Leads, Wingmen and aspiring FFI pilots:

Welcome to the 2018 airshow season! 2018 will be an incredible transition year, as the long awaited revision to FAA Order 8900.1 will be released shortly. We will then begin the implementation period, and the shift to operations under that updated policy document. FFI has been planning for this transition for the past two years, and through the very hard work of your FFI Board, we are ready to proceed into 2018.

Make no mistake, 2018 will be a year of major external administrative and regulatory change. This change will reach into the Policy and Administrative levels of FFI, and will have impact on the Operational and Procedural levels as well...primarily in terms of FFI card authorizations and limitations. Fortunately, the basic tenets of formation flying remain unchanged, so you'll find that we have not changed the vast majority of our formation flying procedures and techniques. Your FFI Board has prepared an excellent array of updated and new reference manuals, and we have created an updated FFI website with vastly improved content, including FFI background information, contact information, and links to all reference and regulatory material.

Your FFI Board will be available throughout the transition period, and beyond, to help all of our members navigate through this transition.

Executive Summary of this Update

- **FFI Expansion and Growth**
- **FFI Organizational Structure Update**
- **FFI Board/CP Meeting and All Hands Meeting at OSH '18**
- **FAA Order 8900.1 Implementation Update**
- **FFI Manual Revision and Release**
- **FFI Website Update**

- FFI Expansion and Growth

FFI has grown this past year, in terms of number of FFI cardholders that are credentialed and current. FFI has remained vibrant and effective during a period of relative uncertainty, with respect to the pending release of the updated 8900.1, which has taken far longer than anyone involved envisioned or desired. Your patience, flexibility and perseverance in the field have been remarkable, and are truly appreciated.

In addition to this steady growth via typical training and checkrides, FFI is now about to begin growing somewhat rapidly, as we welcome groups of non-warbird GA aircraft that previously trained with FAST into our family. As you may or may not know, this past year FAST made a policy shift to focus on warbird aircraft only. FAA supports this policy shift, and both FAST and FAA have asked that FFI step in to fill the void left for these groups. FFI is proud to do so.

The first group to begin this migration to FFI is The Mooney Caravan, and its several squadrons. The Caravan, led by



their President Larry “Joker” Brennan, and Ops Group Commander Chuck “Cowboy” Crinnian, trains Mooney pilots for its mass arrival into OSH (similar to B2OSH), and conducts advanced training for its pilots that previously aspired to earn FAST cards, and will now earn FFI cards. They have several FAST-qualified pilots in their ranks, and their group is eager to join FFI and transition to FFI cards. We have begun that process by working with the Caravan Ops Group to create a Mooney Supplement to the FFI Formation Guidelines, and are beginning the process of cross-pollination of Mooney pilots into FFI procedures at Bonanza clinics, Caravan Clinics, and other events. Evaluations for FFI cards for an initial cadre of Mooney/Caravan pilots are planned for later this year. Craig “2B” Wilcox, FFI Board Member and Check Pilot has stepped up as a liaison and mentor for the Caravan transition team.

The next group to start a transition to FFI is the Rutan Aircraft Flying Experience, a group of Vari-Eze, Long-Eze, and other Rutan-based canard design aircraft, led by Ryszard Zadow and Leif Johnson. We are just beginning our liaison with them, and this weekend, FFI Board Member and Check Pilot Greg “Greese” Reese will be attending their formation clinic in Tennessee. We envision a similar path for RASE as the path we have planned for The Mooney Caravan, in support of their efforts to build a large team to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Burt Rutan’s Eze aircraft design in a few years.

We are excited to welcome these two groups of formation aviators, and we anticipate more will follow. This will stretch FFI-carded Flight Leads and Check Pilots a bit thin at times, so we hope we can count on our fine cadre of Flight Leads and Wingmen to lend a hand in support of cross-pollination and training of these new aspiring FFI formation pilots!

- FFI Organizational Structure Update

I took the reigns of FFI leadership in June 2015 from our Founder and Mentor, Stu “Falcon” McCurdy. Falcon built an amazingly effective organization that withstood the regulatory challenges and growth of the first 15 years of its existence. As you know, the past two and a half years have had plenty of challenge as well, including external challenges to the limits of FFI card authority and the scope and training applicability of our entire Program. The organization that Falcon built has proven resilient. However, we have responded to these challenges with some organizational strengthening that I will outline here.

FFI was run as a sole proprietorship for its first 15 years. We have now fully incorporated FFI as a Nevada State Corporation, thanks to the efforts of FFI Board Member and Check Pilot Mark “Dula” Dulaney. The corporation now has a set of established Bylaws that have been vetted and approved by your FFI Board. The leadership structure has been expanded and changed from the single leadership position of FFI Administrator, to a more traditional arrangement of Trustees and a Board of Directors/Officers. The Trustees are the three of us that formed the corporation, who are Mark “Dula” Dulaney, Jim “Gringo” Gray, and I. The Trustees have established the first slate of Officers and Board of Directors, as follows:

President:	Bob “Nasty” Mills
Vice President:	Tim “Tank” Redden
Secretary/Treasurer:	Mark “Dula” Dulaney
Operations/Training Officer:	Jim “Gringo” Gray
Asst Operations/Training Officer:	Craig “2B” Wilcox
Airshow Operations Officer:	Greg “Greese” Reese
Safety Officer:	Pat “Glider” Tuckey

Thank you to all of these gents for stepping up! This initial slate of Officers will serve until our first official election, which will be held during OSH '18. Per our Bylaws, the voting members for election of Officers are the Trustees, the Board/Officers, and the current FFI Check Pilots. Any current carded FFI member may run for any Officer position, and nominations will be accepted during our planned Board meeting during OSH '18. As FFI expands with new aircraft type communities, we will also examine the potential to have type community reps as part of the Board. Beginning with the



2018 election, the term of office for our elected Officer/Board Member positions will be three years.

The FFI Bylaws are available for review by any member (FFI cardholder) upon request to the President or Secretary/Treasurer.

FFI Board/CP Meeting and All Hands Meeting at OSH '18

As discussed in general terms above, FFI is planning a Board/Check Pilot meeting, followed by an open all hands meeting during OSH '18. The Board meeting will include the election of Officers. Dula Dulaney is working logistics on this now, and we will have more info out to you as soon as we firm things up. Basic plan is to conduct the meetings mid-morning during the early part of AirVenture week. More to follow on this, but we hope to have a large FFI presence at OSH this year!

- FAA Order 8900.1 Implementation Update

It appears that the FAA Order 8900.1 is about to be released. I know we have been discussing this for over a year (plus) now, and it may seem like crying wolf. However, after a discussion this week with Sue Gardner (National Aviation Event Specialist), it sounds as though it is about to be sent up for signature. She expects publication and implementation to begin this month. Based on that info, I requested, and received, authorization to release our updated FFI Program Manual and our related reference material. That release is effective immediately, and the materials can be found on our updated website ffi.aero. I'll discuss the FFI manuals and the FFI website further in the next sections of this update.

As far as 8900.1 implementation goes, the primary concern for us is how will this impact us. As discussed in previous FFI updates, the majority of our formation procedures and techniques, and the flying portion of our checkrides remain essentially unchanged. The majority of the change is in terms of airshow, or Aviation Event operations where a Certificate of Waiver is in effect. We will be held to higher level of required knowledge about airshow operations and limitations, and there are some new limitations on maneuvers that we are allowed to perform in an airshow or Aviation Event CoW. FFI and FAST cardholders will be limited to what will be known as Standard Maneuvering. To perform Dynamic Maneuvering or Aerobatic Maneuvering, pilots will be required to earn and hold SAC qualifications appropriate to each. Our FFI evaluations will include all of the maneuvering (flying) elements they have in the past, and airshow operations knowledge will be evaluated during an expanded oral evaluation during checkrides. Our updated Program Manual, and two new reference documents (an Airshow Operations Supplement and an Evaluation Supplement) have been developed to provide our pilots with all the information required to be successful...both in the evaluation, and in actual airshow operations.

The 2018 implementation schedule, as Sue Gardner envisions it, looks like this:

- Release in March 2018, 60-day Implementation Period Begins
- 60 days after release, all airshow performers must be fully compliant with the updated 8900.1 policy, unless previously granted a deviation (grandfathered for specific maneuvers)
- Approximately August 1, 2018, all granted deviations (grandfathered allowances) expire, and full compliance with the new 8900.1 is required.

How does this impact FFI cardholders? While the current 8900.1 is in effect, we operate under it, and we are also currently operating under an FAA AFS-800 issued Deviation Memo that allows two things:

1. It allows *all* FFI cardholders to momentarily direct the energy vector of the aircraft towards the primary spectator area, with limitations as outlined in the memo.



2. It allows *specified FFI-carded performance teams* the authority to continue to fly maneuvers that will be Dynamic Maneuvering under the new 8900.1 policy until the end of the deviation (grandfather) period,

Part 1 above will be no longer necessary when the new 8900.1 is released. Momentary energy projection at the primary spectator area is addressed in the new policy, and all FFI cardholders will be authorized to do so under the new policy, within the limitations of the policy.

Part 2 above only applies to 11 specified FFI-carded performing teams, which have been operating under this part of the deviation memo since 2015. Part 2 basically allows these 11 teams to continue to perform Dynamic Maneuvering with their FFI cards until the end of the grace period (nominally August 1, 2018, with final date issued upon release of the 8900.1). This gives those 11 teams the ability to continue to perform their current routines, while seeking SAC Dynamic Maneuvering-Formation qualifications. Any FFI cardholders not performing on those 11 teams are not grandfathered, and must have SAC DM-F cards before flying DM routines in CoW events in 2018. We cannot add any teams to that list at this point, per FAA.

A document containing the Deviation Memo, the list of 11 teams, and the extension e-mail are now posted on the FFI website, along with an updated FFI guidance memo on the use of the Deviation Memo. The first three items must be in hand when performing in a CoW and utilizing the authorization of the Deviation Memo.

The process for obtaining SAC DM-F cards is going to be via ICAS or Warbirds of America. ICAS will be our path, given we fly non-warbirds. The ACE manual update to include DM evaluation procedures is in the approval process now. The grace period offered by the FAA is designed to allow the ACEs to get up and running with the new program, and to allow our teams to work up for and be evaluated for the SAC DM-F quals. FFI will update members as more fidelity on this process is provided.

As this implementation takes place, the best way to prepare is to dig into the FFI Program Manual and the Airshow and Eval Supplements, and immerse yourself in the material. It is repeated in each manual, and the repetition will help everyone absorb and learn the new authorizations and limitations. With the release of our updated docs, and the availability of the docs on the FFI website, you can begin that process now. When the actual 8900.1 is released, you will find the policy guidance there. Our manuals should help clarify the verbiage in the policy doc. The 8900.1 is HUGE, so to help you keep from getting lost and tossing it aside, our focus is on subsections 3-143, 3-145, 3-147 and 3-149.

As we go through this implementation and transition year, if you have questions on the 8900.1 and its impact on FFI cardholders, please contact any FFI Board Member for assistance or clarification.

- FFI Manual Revision and Release

The updates to the FFI Program Manual and the FFI Formation Guidelines are complete, and are now published on the FFI website. As mentioned earlier, FFI has also created the Evaluation Supplement and the Airshow Operations Supplement, as additional resources. We received the green light from FAA (Sue Gardner) this week to publish and disseminate these manuals now. I know that many in the field have been waiting patiently for these manuals, to allow them to train at clinics and elsewhere with the new material. Thank you for your patience. All FFI-based training is now cleared to use the new manuals at this time. I know that reading manuals is like practicing bleeding, but I really encourage you all to sink your teeth into the Program Manual and the Supplements to absorb the changes. I also encourage you to read through the Formation Guidelines in depth as well. While the basic formation procedures have not changed, I think you will find some improved presentation of materials in several areas.

I'd like to thank all members of the FFI Board for their work in the development of these outstanding products



- FFI Website Update

Tank Redden has hit a home run with the updated website: ffi.aero. The new site has an intro page, a documents page with descriptions of FFI manuals and reference material (as well as links to all docs and forms), a links page that we hope will become populated with organizational events, clinics and info from the field, an FAQ page, and a Contact page with Board Member and Check Pilot info. The documents page also contains "permalinks", which Tank has set up to ensure document version control; so that organizations and teams may use the link on their website, and the link will always direct users to the most current document. This will alleviate the need to download and send documents, which after revision cycles may become obsolete. We're really trying to make the FFI website a one stop shopping source for FFI documents and forms. Another improvement is that there are links to each eval form, qualification form and the Annual Activity Report on the Documents page of the website. The big news here is that these forms are now functional and fillable! We can all thank Tank's bride Shawna (aka Tankerbelle) for this greatly improved product!

Thanks very much for your time in reading through this update. I hope it has provided some good insight and SA into what 2018 will bring us. I hope you all have great airshow seasons, and that your clinics and training evolutions are safe and effective. I look forward to seeing you out in the field, and I hope we have a huge presence at OSH '18. We'll keep you updated on that!

Please feel free to ask any questions, fly safe, and have fun!

Cheers,

Nasty

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