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I'm Glad You Asked

MEL requirements for the turbine PA46

By Dick Rochfort, ATP, MCFI, CFII, MEI

QUESTION: I am getting conflicting answers about the requirements for an MEL for my Part 91 operated Meridian, can anyone clear up the confusion? Thanks.

ANSWER: I'm glad you asked ...

There is a bit of confusion on the topic of MEL requirements and I would like to help sort this out. Let's look first at 91.213 since this is where the requirement for an MEL exists. It reads in part:

“(a) Except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, no person may takeoff an aircraft with inoperative instruments or equipment installed unless the following conditions are met:

- (1) An approved Minimum Equipment List exists for that aircraft.
- (2) The aircraft has within it a letter of authorization (LOA), issued by the FAA Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) having jurisdiction over the area in which the operator is located, authorizing operation of the aircraft under the Minimum Equipment List. The letter of authorization may be obtained by written request of the airworthiness certificate holder. The Minimum Equipment List and the letter of authorization constitute a supplemental type certificate for the aircraft.”

In summary, 91.213 says that if there is an MMEL (Master Minimum Equipment List) for the aircraft (and there is one for the P46T), you may not takeoff with inoperative equipment without an approved MEL and an LOA (letter of authorization).

It does not say you have to have an MEL. It says you must have an MEL if you want to takeoff with inoperative equipment.

There are exemptions for fixed wing piston powered aircraft and others, however, 91.213 does not exempt the P46T because it is turbine powered. It is also true that, as of this writing, the FAA at the Baltimore FSDO is not currently enforcing the Part 91 MEL requirements, nor is the Philadelphia FSDO. Each FSDO may make their own judgment about enforcement, so you will need to check with your local FSDO on this and I suggest you do so in writing to avoid any .. ahem .. misunderstanding.

If you decide to create an MEL for your aircraft look first at the FAA MMEL in the Reference Library.

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The MMEL is the document you should use to develop your own MEL. You should also consider the relevant Ops Spec for guidance, also in the reference library.

I have developed a MEL for the PA46-500T and it is posted on my website in Microsoft Word format.

You are welcome to use this one if you like, although you will need to address any equipment differences. Once you have done so, fax the MEL to your local FSDO with a request for an LOA, and then place these documents in your POH. That's all there is to it.

The MEL requirement is in addition to the Kinds List in your POH which affects airworthiness. It is also in addition to the requirements of 91.205, although there is significant overlap. Make sure you consider these items when developing your MEL.

If you are unsure about these regulations, have questions or need help, feel free to give me a call.

I hope this information is helpful.

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“I’m Glad You Asked” is a regular column written by Master Flight Instructor Dick Rochfort. Dick answers questions which come up frequently while conducting training in the Malibu, Mirage and Meridian aircraft. If you have a question for Dick, you can send it to him at mail@rwrpilottraining.com. He’ll be ... “glad you asked”.

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