

September 12, 2019

The Hammer has dropped in Mexico



A special report from the Baja Bush Pilots.

This report has been put together after countless conversations with both Mexican officials and US Pilots over the past week. It is serious and if Mexican rules are not followed, you might not be allowed to fly back into Mexico again via private aircraft.

Due to the actions of some operators, (pilots) both National and International, Mexico has now taken off their gloves and is playing hardball regarding many of their rules and regulations that have been ignored or taken advantage of.

The rules are not new and most have been around for as long as most can remember however, with the loss of licensed airports for whatever reason and the fact that some think that when in Mexico, the rules do not really count, Mexico is now enforcing these specific rules as well as others that will affect many who do Baja and Main-land Mexico

The rules that are addressed per the directive from Mexico City are.

. A flight plan must be filed when departing a controlled airport and that flight plan must be followed. If a plan was filed to an airport that cannot be used or reached because of weather, etc., it is the pilot's responsibility to contact the closest tower or center to request the change. And if this is not possible, the pilot must contact DGAC officials by telephone upon arrival at a different airport

. You cannot land at any airport, strip, etc. that does not have a current license for that airport unless in the case of an emergency. And if it is an emergency, you must contact and file an emergency landing report as soon as possible.

It is the duty of the pilot to ask when filing a flight plan if the airport is open as well if your plans include going on to other un-towered airports, those are also open. You lack of knowledge is not a valid excuse.

. You cannot work Part 135 flights unless you and your aircraft are rated / licensed for 135 and have authorization from Mexico to do so.

This is only for those that carry persons for hire. A pilot can bring family and / or friends with him as well certain humanitarian groups can have people who share costs however, the DGAC will not turn a blind eye on flights that are suspect to be unlicensed Part 135 flights. If the DGAC is in doubt, you will be in violation of the rules unless proven otherwise.

. All entry / departures from Mexico to / from any other international airport (i.e. US) must be from a Mexican International Airport, no exceptions.

. You cannot bring packages from an International destination if those packages are to be delivered or picked up by someone else unless you have a Mexican license to do so.

The above rules should not be a "deer in the headlights" moment. We all know the rules and some fly responsibly in Mexico by following them and others choose to not do so.

How does Mexico know if you are in violation of the above rules as well as other rules?

In recent years, Mexico has seen an increased number of violations however has lacked the ability to enforce these violations.

Now, with the advancement of communications and technology, Mexico has many of the same tools that the US has. These include:

- . Radar coverage from Monterrey, Hermosillo, and Mazatlán.
- . The ability to see ADS-B in many locations. (Don't even think about turning off your transponder as you will still reflect an unknown target and you can expect to have a suspect drug intercept)
- . Several Mexican radar aircraft are now in the air. They can be anywhere at any time and there seems to be a lot of activity in Baja lately
- . DGAC offices are getting more and more reports from the military who log all landings at all airport / airstrips, licensed or not. This information in many cases is now used to enforce the use of unlicensed airports.
- . Reports from "un-official" people at some airports that may or may not like the use of unlicensed airports from some people.
- . And last, a "gut" feeling from a Mexican official who might question where you come from and where you are going. You can try to "bluff" your way through however, you will not know what he knows and you just might find yourself deeper in trouble.

And what happens if you have a violation of Mexico's rules.

- . Your Mexican aircraft authorization (GD and/or MEA) will be taken from you, you will be directed to leave Mexico immediately as you are in Mexico illegally, and that the aircraft you are flying will not be allowed to come back into Mexico (blacklisted) for no less than the current calendar year and perhaps longer.
- . Your violation may be reported to the FAA in the US
- . You might be detained and / or fined depending on the severity of the violation
- . There will be no warning. As the pilot in command, you are expected to know and follow Mexico rules.

This is not smoke and mirrors.

There are no less than six aircraft within the past week that have had their Authorization papers pulled and sent back to the US. Those include several who have filed to one licensed strip but went to another unlicensed strip as well as almost all those who have been doing Part 135 work in northern Baja without the proper paperwork. All have had their aircraft blacklisted and those people are now transporting their people (guests) from the US to their camps by ground.

And I have been told that this is not just a Baja thing but with direction from Mexico City, this covers all of Mexico

This is a huge deal for many of us as most of the airports that we like to go to and enjoy are unlicensed thusly illegal to use.

There are only about nine licensed non-towered airport in Baja and every year, another goes away. I have been told by official Mexican sources that Bay or LA is close to getting its license and there will be more however, to license an airport normally takes several trips to DF, mountains of paperwork, about US\$12,000, and about 6 months to make happen. It all takes time

Again, all of the above is not new. All of the above has been in effect for many years but now, due to abuse by some, Mexico has taken a tough position which, if you chose to ignore their rules, my find yourself in a position that you might not really want to be in.

I have also told by several Mexican sources that all rules will be enforced across the board equally. If there have been any "good guy" favors in the past, it is over.

You have to remember that we who fly in Mexico are guests of their country and must follow the rules of their country.

As I see it, if we don't follow their rules and regulations, Mexico could start requiring advance permission from the DGAC (not the Mexican eAPIS requirement) to enter Mexico like almost all of the countries south of Mexico require.

And believe me, advance DGAC permission to enter is not something that we want....

Questions?

Contact the office of the DGAC in the area that you plan on operating in

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