

# Flight Policies & Guidelines

## **I. Purpose**

This document defines various policies, procedures, and guidelines relating to Los Amigos' flight operations and its volunteer member-pilots.

## **II. Distribution**

This document shall be distributed (via e-mail or paper) to new members of Flying Samaritans who are pilots. In addition, if the document is revised, it shall be redistributed to all member-pilots of the Chapter. It shall also be posted on the Chapter website with other relevant pilot information.

## **III. Overview**

Members of Flying Samaritans who are pilots play a pivotal role in bringing medical care to remote sections of the Baja in Mexico. As private pilots operating under the privileges and limitations of 14 CFR § 61.113, they transport medical providers, interpreters, and helpers to distant village sites having limited or nonexistent medical facilities. And, upon arrival, our volunteer pilots further support clinic operation by performing a wide variety of on-site duties.

## **IV. Pilot Coordinator**

The Los Amigos Chapter of Flying Samaritans shall have a Pilot Coordinator who is an active, experienced pilot and acts as a liaison between the Chapter and its volunteer pilots (herein referred to as "pilots"). Duties of the Pilot Coordinator include but are not limited to:

### **A. General**

1. Ensure that anyone acting as PIC on a Flying Samaritans mission
  - a) is a member of the organization, and
  - b) has signed a Pilot's Acknowledgements agreement within the last year.
2. Ensure that new pilots are familiar with accepted procedures by pairing pilots on their first clinic trip with experienced Flying Samaritans' pilots. The Pilot Coordinator may waive this requirement based upon the experience level of the new pilot.
3. As an experienced aviator, the Pilot Coordinator may offer suggestions to pilots on various aspects of the proposed flight. This should not be confused with instruction or training from a Certificated Flight Instructor.

### **B. Clinic-related**

1. Prior to each clinic trip, work with Trip Coordinator to match available pilot/plane resources with medical providers, translators, and helpers.
2. Contact volunteer pilots with lists of potential passengers, desirable cargo, and mission-specific information (e.g., trip dates and times, overnight location, recent information on MX operations, etc.).

## **V. Flight Operations Committee**

The Los Amigos Chapter of Flying Samaritans shall have a “standing” Flight Operations Committee to review safety concerns and flight-related policies and guidelines. The committee consists of a chairperson, the Chapter’s Pilot Coordinator, and at least one other person. All committee members shall be active, experienced pilots who fly at least two Flying Samaritans’ missions each season.

## **VI. Chapter Policies Relating To Flight**

### **A. General**

1. Safety during flight operations is the highest priority. As PIC, volunteer pilots are solely responsible for the safety and welfare of the passengers and aircraft. Pilots shall not take any action that they believe would jeopardize their passengers and aircraft in any way. The following topics merit special attention and shall be avoided:
  - a) Flying overweight for the conditions
  - b) Aerobatic maneuvers, steep turns, etc.
  - c) Formation flying
  - d) Flying with less than normal fuel reserves
  - e) Continuing on a trip that has been canceled due to weather
  - f) Flying in IMC conditions
2. As specified under section II, pilots shall be issued a copy of this document and are required to become familiar with and abide by its contents.
3. No item shall be placed aboard any aircraft without the knowledge and consent of the pilot.
4. Los Amigos’ pilots shall not conduct flights into IMC. At their discretion, rated pilots may file IFR flight plans as appropriate for safe flight and adherence to regulatory requirements (e.g., night flights in Mexico).
5. Pilots shall notify the Pilot Coordinator as soon as possible regarding:
  - a. factors that could adversely affect completion of the requested flight, or
  - b. any change in the status of their pilot license and/or medical.
6. Each passenger in any aircraft involved in a Flying Samaritans activity must, prior to the flight:
  - a. have signed a *Flying Samaritans Release Of Liability* form, and
  - b. be a member of Flying Samaritans.
7. Any pilot acting as PIC of an aircraft involved in a Flying Samaritans activity must, prior to the flight:
  - a. have signed a Pilot’s Acknowledgements agreement,
  - b. submit aircraft information to the Pilot Coordinator (verbally or via the website), and
  - c. be a member of Flying Samaritans.

### **B. FAA-related**

1. Pilots and their passengers shall share flight costs in accord with the requirements of 61.113(c). On each trip, pilots shall calculate the pro rata cost share utilizing actual expenses incurred on that trip. Hence, the pro rata cost share will change from trip to trip.

2. Pilots will conform to the general operating and flight rules of 14 CFR § 91. While in Mexico, Mexican regulations will take precedence in the event of a conflict.

## **VII. Pilot Qualifications**

Volunteer pilots for the Los Amigos Chapter of Flying Samaritans shall meet the following requirements:

1. Submit a signed Pilot's Acknowledgements agreement and conduct themselves in accord with that agreement.
2. Typical flight experience levels 250 hours with an instrument rating or 400 hours without an instrument rating. Based on the volunteer pilots flight experience, the Pilot Coordinator may adjust these minima.

## **VIII. Aircraft Qualifications & Operation**

Aircraft used during Flying Samaritan missions shall meet and be operated in accord with the criteria contained in the Pilot's Acknowledgements agreement.

## **IX. Pilot Guidelines**

The following guidelines are suggestions based on years of experience conducting Flying Samaritans' medical missions. They cover a variety of mission-related topics. However, they do not replace the volunteer pilot's responsibility and authority as PIC for the planning and safe conduct of the flight:

- Upon receiving a list of potential passengers from the Pilot Coordinator, volunteer pilots should contact their passengers as soon as possible regarding the upcoming flight. Since many Flying Samaritan volunteers have no experience with flights in small, general aviation aircraft, pilots should spend time to ensure the comfort and well-being of their passengers. Also, confirm the desired departure location and time, and brief them on what to expect during the flight. And, since many passengers may be unfamiliar with the weight and size limitations of small aircraft, verify the articles they plan to bring with them.
- Volunteer pilots may wish to plan their individual flights to coincide with flights of other Chapter pilots. Maintaining air-to-air communications with other volunteer pilots as well as processing through Mexican Customs and Immigration adds a measure of safety and efficiency.
- As specified in section VI, volunteer pilots must conform to the requirements of 14 CFR 61.113(c). Since Flying Samaritans does not operate as an air carrier or commercial operator, passengers do not pay for their flight per se. Rather, at the pilot's discretion, everyone in the aircraft shares flight-related expenses, including the pilot. Per the FAA regulations, those "expenses involve only fuel, oil, airport expenditures<sup>1</sup>..." Pilots are solely responsible for calculating the pro rata share (for that flight) and collecting the passengers' share of the cost; Flying Samaritans plays no part in the cost sharing. Personal checks from the passengers should be made to the pilot, not the Flying Samaritans. Volunteer pilots who are unfamiliar with 14 CFR 61.113(c) should contact the Pilot Coordinator.
- Like all Flying Samaritans volunteers, volunteer pilots accrue tax-deductible expenses since the Internal Revenue Service recognizes our corporation as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The flying expenses recognized by the IRS *considerably* exceed those recognized by the FAA and shared with the passengers under 14 CFR 61.113(c). New volunteer pilots unfamiliar with

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<sup>1</sup> Airport expenditures typically include landing fees, tie-down fees, and aircraft-related taxes assessed and paid at the airport.

these tax benefits may wish to discuss the matter with other pilots and/or the Pilot Coordinator.

- Volunteer pilots must ensure that each passenger of the aircraft:
  - a. has a Release of Liability on file with the Membership Secretary per section VI, and
  - b. is a current member of Flying Samaritans, and
  - c. has their passport in their possession.

Blank forms are available on the Chapter website at <http://www.flyingsamaritans.com>. To accommodate passengers, pilots should take a few blank forms with them on each mission. Leave the executed forms safely on the ground (e.g., in a car or hangar) for later transmittal to the Membership Secretary. (Do not take them in the aircraft!) Pilots not adhering to this requirement will not be allowed to participate in Flying Samaritan flight activities.

## **X. Summary**

The Los Amigos Chapter of Flying Samaritans is an all-volunteer group of medical providers, interpreters, pilots, and helpers united in a common cause: bringing medical care to remote sections of Baja, Mexico. Travel in small, general aviation aircraft flown by member pilots is integral to the success of this cause. And, the policies and guidelines defined in this document govern that mode of travel -- flight.