

# FAA cracks down on drunk plane drivers

In an attempt to clear the airways of drunk pilots, the Federal Aviation Administration has proposed a rule that would prohibit anyone from piloting an airplane when his/her blood level contains 40 milligrams percent or more of alcohol.

Clifford Cernick, FAA public affairs officer, said, "I imagine two or three drinks will get you up to that level (40 milligrams). It isn't a lot." He added two or three bottles of beer would probably equal 40 milligrams.

The rule is stricter than the .1 percent standard used by most states to determine when a motorist is under the influence of alcohol.

The proposed rule would include an "implied consent" provision which means pilots are required to take a breath test when FAA inspectors requested one. Refusal to take a breath test could result in a suspended or revoked license.

The proposed rule would give FAA a scientific standard that

could be used to take disciplinary action against pilots who drink while flying.

Injured pilots who are unable to take the breath test would be required to provide the FAA with the hospital results of medical tests for blood alcohol.

Present regulations prohibit pilots from flying when under the influence of alcohol or within eight hours of drinking. But there is no standard for defining intoxication and pilots aren't required to take tests.

If passed, the rule would strengthen FAA's ability to deal with pilots who drink. In 1978

the National Transportation Safety Board cited alcohol as a cause or factor in 50 general aviation accidents, 46 of which involved fatalities. Alcohol is suspected in other non-fatal accidents but there's no way to establish the fact because pilots aren't required to take alcohol tests.