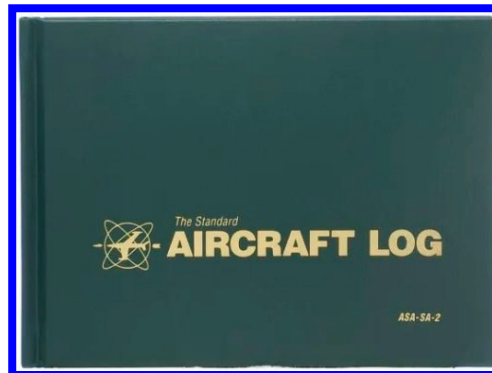


LOGBOOKS?... WHAT LOGBOOKS?

If you look at the FAR's, specifically the maintenance rules, there is no reference at all to the word "logbook". All the FAA requires is for any maintenance or modifications entered into the "Permanent Aircraft records". It says,

"An aircraft operator is responsible to record and manage airframe, engine and avionics installation, inspection and maintenance records in a complete and orderly fashion".

They leave it up to you to determine how to do that. It may just be tradition but when you mention the word "logbook" to any mechanic they, of course, think of the small Aircraft, Engine or Propeller logbooks that almost all civilian aircraft owners have. These logbooks or Permanent Aircraft Records are very valuable when it comes time to sell or even when you are changing mechanics. Any mechanic worth his or her salt will want to review them for at least the first time when he or she is tasked to do any work on your Seabee. Let him or her review them in your hangar or at your home. It may cost you a bit more but is cheap insurance against loss or damage. Also, keep in mind that the FAA can request the "logbooks" at any time so their location must be known and they must be supplied to the FAA within a "reasonable" amount of time.



Typical "Aircraft" logbook

The feedback I got from local mechanics and airmen was, "Without the logbooks all you have is a parts plane!" It will take a lot of time and effort to retrieve any records stored at the FAA or, if you are lucky, from the previous mechanics (if they kept any records at all). The value of the logbooks? Each person said between 30% and 50% of the value of the airplane. This is good for any potential buyer but the seller is getting shorted substantial compensation when it comes time to sell. Needless to say the logbooks should be kept in a secure, undisclosed location. Also, when it comes time for that inevitable Annual Inspection, do not let them out of your sight! The mechanic that has done my Annual Inspections for the past five years always fills them out in the presence of me and my Seabee at my insistence. Most reputable mechanics will understand.



There has been more than one instance where the logbooks of a Seabee listed for sale have no logbooks. They could be lost, stolen or burned up in a fire. Consequently the new owner must recover as much information as they can to prove to the FAA the aircraft is or was airworthy with all AD's and STC's complied with not to mention any "Field Approvals" (FAA form 337's). A very thorough "Annual" is surely in its future along with much bargaining with the powers that be. New logbooks can be started but not after much gnashing of teeth and research.

The moral of the story can best be explained with a situation one of our members has gone through:

This member gave all his aircraft records to an out-of-state mechanic to review as he was trying to resolve an issue that I will not go into right now. That was in July 2022. It is now December 2022 and still no logbooks or records. Not only that, the owner was charged a bunch of money (for who knows what) which the owner paid thinking this would expedite the return of the records but to no avail. Still no logbooks. The mechanic promised to return the logbooks by either flying them back to the owner or FedEx-ing them back (FedEx shipping was even included in the above bill). This option was offered twice. The mechanic wanted the owner to sign a "hold harmless" agreement before returning the books for reasons unknown.

As of this writing the owner has taken legal steps to get all the aircraft records returned. This includes filing a report to the local sheriff's office as well as the sheriff's office in the county that the mechanic resides. AOPA has also been called and their legal department had some good advice. A private attorney was also contacted and may be used if needed. The local FAA Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) in the mechanics region was notified as well. It turns out that the FAA there has been very helpful (remember, they can ask for the Aircraft Records at any time). They contacted the mechanic and verified that the logbooks were, in fact, there. The mechanic said that all records were intact and he would return them via FedEx. Eventually they were returned after much unnecessary work on the owners part.

If you haven't realized by now how very important it is to keep your aircraft records secure then read page one again! Never let anyone take your logbooks out of your sight. They are too important to risk losing or being damaged.

Consider this: Your conscientious and trustworthy mechanic takes them home and gets into a car crash on the way home. The car burns up along with all your records! I know it's a long shot but it could happen. Why take that chance.

As mentioned before the value is substantial especially if you have the original 1946 logbooks! These are priceless historical documents that could never be replaced. If your mechanic insists on taking them home get a new mechanic!