

Importing an Airplane into Canada

by Dale Floyd



Many of you have heard the absolute horror stories of importing an airplane from the US. I'm hoping to show you that it really doesn't have to be a big deal, or expensive to get a great deal on an airplane from south of the border. The time has never been better with our near par exchange rate, and the low selling prices in the US, to find the airplane of your dreams at a bargain price.

The most important thing you can do prior to importing an airplane is to do your research properly. Not only is it important to make sure the aircraft is safe and serviceable, but it is extremely important to ensure it is eligible for import and make sure the paperwork has been done in a way acceptable to Transport Canada.

Lots of people will see an airplane on one of the marketing sites or maybe even on eBay and be amazed at the price. It may have a tremendous amount of equipment and great modifications—almost too good to be true. I hate to say but it may well be. During the importation process, you will be required to show that all repairs and modifications have been done in accordance with approved data. This may be via maintenance manuals, repair drawings issued by the manufacturer or a DER, an STC or in some cases, the FAA may have signed off on a 337 (repair or modification form) in block 3. Many times, I've found modifications and repairs not signed off in a way that would not be acceptable to Transport Canada but if you don't know how to tell the difference, this is where things get expensive. If a modification has been signed off on a 337 by an IA referencing another 337 from another



airplane, you may have to take that modification off your airplane or redo the modification after you buy the STC to allow you to do it.

I know it sounds confusing, but really it isn't. Quite simply, as I said before, if you do your homework, an import is quite simple. With today's technology, it is very easy to get a seller to scan and email enough of the airplane's logbooks to ensure that it will be eligible to import it. You can also get the FAA file on the airplane which will show not only all the records of the 337s filed for the airplane, but any accidents as well.

You can also see if any liens are on the airplane. This simplifies the process a lot and lets you know more about the history of the airplane. Once you have all that, and have numerous pictures that are easily sent via email, you will have a pretty good idea if the airplane is worth looking at. This is where it is very important to have an engineer who is familiar with imports go, and actually look to make sure the airplane actually matches the paperwork. There are cases, where the airplane just doesn't live up to what the paperwork shows. If it all lives up to its billing, then it's a simple case of getting the airplane up here. There are a couple ways of doing that and the easiest, and sometimes the best, is to have the former owner fly it up with you. This can not only be a great adventure for both of you, but also a good introduction to flying a new type. Another way is to hire a ferry pilot and then if able bring it up with the US registration or if that is not possible, on a ferry permit with its Canadian registration.



Once the airplane is here, it's a very simple process because we have already ensured that everything will go smoothly. We get the airplane registered in Canada and put the Canadian registration on it. Then we do an annual inspection, get all the paperwork together for all existing 337s, STCs, repairs, weight and balance and equipment lists. We put that all together with the information required by Transport Canada's import checklist (MSI26). When this is all done, we get the Ministers Delegate Maintenance (MDM) to come and check both what we have done, as well as look at the actual airplane and at the end, issue the Canadian certificate of airworthiness.

I know it sounds like a lot, but it really goes quite smoothly if it is all done properly. The normal time from arrival in Canada to issuance of its Canadian C of A should be between two and four weeks.



Dale Floyd is licensed as both a Pilot and Aircraft Maintenance engineer and owns Coast Dog Aviation Ltd. He has been involved in aviation for 38 years and has performed numerous pre-purchases and imports on aircraft from the USA and other countries as well as exports to the US. If you would like more information, visit www.coastdogaviation.com