



News & Videos FAA, type club team up for circuit-breaker fix

FAA, TYPE CLUB TEAM UP FOR CIRCUIT-BREAKER FIX

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By Dan Namowitz

The FAA has issued a **special airworthiness information bulletin (SAIB)** affecting some Beechcraft, Cessna, and other aircraft equipped with switch-style circuit breakers that have experienced continued failures despite previous attempts to correct problems.

The FAA issued the SAIB, rather than a new airworthiness directive pertaining to W31 series switch style circuit breakers manufactured by Tyco or Potter Brumfield, after evaluating information collected from aircraft owners and operators. The American Bonanza Society coordinated the gathering of the users' information for the FAA, assisted by AOPA.

The SAIB mostly affects Beechcraft airplanes with some Cessna 400-series twins, and any experimental amateur-built aircraft with the same type circuit breaker installed. It is expected to save many aircraft operators thousands of dollars, and extensive aircraft downtime compared to the issuance of an airworthiness directive, the American Bonanza Society said.

"I believe it does everything we need to do in the interest of safety—it makes pilots and aircraft owners aware of the issue, and it recommends pre-emptive replacement on a realistic schedule but does not require replacement if the breakers are in good working order," said Thomas Turner, executive director of the American Bonanza Society Safety Foundation.

The SAIB, issued March 13, recommends but does not require that the switches be

replaced at 2,000 hours time in service, or at 600 hours for high-use training aircraft.

The American Bonanza Society credited the aviation community's effort to address the issue by working directly with the FAA's Small Airplane Directorate as key to producing the solution. AOPA supported the American Bonanza Society's efforts, **urging members** in September 2012 to participate in the group's initiative to gather data from aircraft owners and operators about their experience with the switch. The FAA had requested that the information be collected after failures continued in aircraft thought to be compliant with a 2008 AD on the circuit breakers.

The SAIB will save most American Bonanza Society members between \$2,000 and \$4,000 over an AD requiring replacement of the circuit breakers, the Bonanza group said.

"The FAA has evaluated the additional data associated with the switches and finds no further mandatory action is warranted at this time," the SAIB says. It stresses that the newly issued bulletin supplements the previous ADs, but "does not alleviate" its original requirements.



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