

Excerpts from Baja Bush Pilots website

The Mexican government has made a recent change (January 2004) that allows US liability insurance to provide protection when in the Country of Mexico. In order for this to be accepted, the words "Liability Insurance in Mexico" must be stated in your policy and that the limits of coverage are covered. (we advise that US pilots continue to purchase Mexican insurance for at least one more year, primarily to insure that Mexican authorities understand that you are covered and don't face additional challenges in the case of an incident.

The Baja Bush Pilots have the necessary licenses and Mexican Insurers to provide this insurance at a discount to our members. This insurance is US\$110 per year for private aircraft and US\$250 per year for business aircraft. There are limitations. We can write you a policy with a credit card. In a hurry? As a faxed copy of your policy is acceptable, print out the form on this site, fill it out, and fax the form to us and we will fax back a copy of your policy and you are on your way.

The BBP Liability Insurance for your aircraft provides you with US\$270,000 combined single limit civil liability, US\$2,000/10,000 medical, bail bond and Mexican legal fees.

Southbound (Entering Mexico)

Your first airport in Mexico must be a "Mexican Airport of Entry" (M-AOE).

- 1) File a flight plan with the US Flight Service from your departure point to an M-AOE.
- 2) If you know your return date, file a second flight plan from an M-AOE to a US-AOE (we will discuss why on your return "Northbound" flight).
- 3) Open your US flight plan upon departure (you do not close it when crossing the border, it just goes away).
- 4) Call the M-AOE Tower at the normal distance out (10 miles) indicating you will be landing.
- 5) Land at the M-AOE. There you will be issued either a Multiple-Entry Authorization or a General Declaration (form GCH 40) these forms allow your aircraft to be in Mexico. Required information includes:
 - a) your aircraft registration
 - b) your pilots license and medical certificate.
 - c) your Mexican liability insurance
 - d) in all my years, I have never been asked for a radio license. (no problem)

It is best to request a Multiple Entry Authorization. The price is the same and it is good for entry the entire calendar year. You will need two copies of all your paperwork plus the originals for this to be issued.

- 6) Each person in the aircraft will be required to prove their citizenship with passport or birth certificate and a picture ID.

7) Mexican flight service will then issue two flight plans, one from the US to that M-AOE and a second to where you are going (Yes, your US flight plan did not count).

8) Pay your landing fees (approximately US\$7.00 for single, US\$15 .00 for light twin).

9) Depart for your next destination.

Now for the fun stuff (policy seems to change daily)

Regarding immigration: Inside each M-AOE, there is a red/green light with "the button" (like a traffic signal). When pushed, if it is green, there is no luggage inspection. If red, your luggage will be inspected. Sometimes the pilot pushes it for all in the aircraft, sometimes the head of each family pushes it, and sometimes all push. There is no pattern (at many small AOEs, the red light/green light is kind of ignored). If you don't see it and are not directed to it, don't ask about it.

From another source another version of the same thing –

When you cross most borders you will be asked to push a button. If you hit green you will continue to pass through. If you hit a red signal your luggage will be searched. Additionally, if you look suspicious or a guard wants, you can be searched regardless of the light.

Regarding registration: If you are taking an aircraft down that is registered to a corporation, it is best to have a notarized letter stating that you are on a pleasure trip and not on business.

Regarding children: If you are taking a child and both parents are not with the child, you must have a notarized letter from each absent parent indicating permission to take the child across the border.

Regarding pets: Many travel with their dogs (and other pets) in Mexico. It does not seem to be a problem; however, it would be best if you do have a record of their shots. Some say that the bigger the dog in the aircraft, the shorter the inspection.

Regarding Fuel: At this time, expect to pay between US\$2.50 to US\$4.00 depending on if you are at a controlled airport or a private airport. In some cases, the higher fuel price is because of the difficulty to transport it and in other cases.... who knows. Fuel from an official fuel pump is clean. Take your own oil as oil is very limited.

Regarding Dollars: Fees are always computed in Pesos and converted to dollars. The exchange always favors the one doing the conversion and exact change is rare. With little exception, you will always pay cash for airport fees and fuel. Also, your money must be "almost new". No tears or corners torn off. (no really old or wrinkled bills) If they don't like the looks of it, they won't take it.

Regarding Military: Expect to be "greeted" at all uncontrolled airports by the Mexican army. In most cases, they will spot themselves around your aircraft with their guns "at ready" until the ranking soldier determines that all is correct. He will not speak English; however, all he wants to know is what your name is, the N

number of your aircraft, where you live, where you came from and where you are going. He will also want to glance into your aircraft. This is not all bad; however, you should make your passengers aware prior to landing that it is perfectly normal for five 15 year old soldiers with fully loaded automatic weapons to surround your aircraft. They will not shoot you; they are just doing their job. After inspection, it is not unusual to hitch a ride in the back of their Hum-V to wherever you are going.

Regarding flight plans: You are only issued flight plans at controlled airports. A flight plan is not what we expect in the US. It seems to be just a way to count the number of aircraft in the sky. If you do not show up, there is no checking or searching. In addition, when you file to an uncontrolled airport, there is no one to close your flight plan with, so, file your plan and depart. The only time that you will be issued a flight plan is when you arrive or depart a controlled airport. The system ignores takeoffs and landings at uncontrolled airports.

If this sounds confusing, it is not. It is just like eating an elephant. Just take a bite at a time and have a good time.

Northbound (Entering USA)

Whenever leaving Mexico, you should exit from an M-AOE. There you will surrender your general declaration. If you have a Multi-Entry Authorization, it is not surrendered. In some cases, immigration will inspect your aircraft as well as Customs. In some locations, they will request the return of your immigration papers.

There you will file a flight plan to your US-AOE and request that they advise Customs. In most cases, you will arrive before your flight plan does however, more about that later so....

- 1) Land at an M-AOE and surrender your general declaration (not the Multi-Entry).
- 2) File for a US-AOE and request that they advise US customs.
- 3) Depart for the United States.
- 4) Contact US Flight Service as soon as possible via radio to both amend your arrival time and open your flight plan. (remember the second flight plan you filed prior to leaving the US?)

Big rule: You must give US Customs one hour notice prior to landing, however, you can amend a flight plan with thirty minutes notice so.... by filing your return when leaving the US and then amending it in the air, you can cross thirty minutes sooner. It has been said that the fine for breaking the one hour rule can be up to US \$5,000 however I have never heard of this being assessed.

- 5) US Flight Service will give you a squawk code to use until crossing the border.
- 6) Close your flight plan (in the air is ok) prior to landing at your US-AOE.
- 7) Taxi to Customs and all must stand by your aircraft until directed otherwise by a US Customs agent (bathroom trips must wait and it can be tough).
- 8) If you bring prohibited food, like fruit, bread, etc., this is an excellent time to eat

up because if you don't, there is a good chance you will have to toss it.

9) To speed things up and look like someone who knows what they are doing, it is best to have your Private Aircraft Enforcement System Arrival Report (CBP Form 178) filled out prior to landing.