

FAA Cites Safety Concerns For Certain Homebuilts

Pilots who fly high-performance amateur-built aircraft need to be aware of their slow-flight and stall characteristics, the FAA said last week. In an "information for operators" bulletin ([PDF](#)), the FAA said Lancairs and other amateur-built aircraft with high wing loading and stall speeds higher than 61 knots have prompted concern due to a "large and disproportionate" number of accidents. Most of the accidents were due to inadvertent stall/spins while at slower airspeeds in home



airport traffic patterns. Joseph Bartels, owner of Lancair Intl., based in Redmond, Ore., told the [Bend Bulletin](#) proper training is the key to improving the safety record. He said pilots who fly Lancairs should train with instructors who are familiar with the aircraft and practice how to "avoid any adverse flight characteristics ... no matter what the speed." The FAA suggested four steps that pilots should take to improve safety.

First, the FAA said, pilots should be sure they thoroughly understand their airplane's flight characteristics, and get some intensive training with an instructor who is familiar with their make and model. **Second, owners should install an angle-of-attack indicator and/or a stall warning indicator, and be sure they are properly calibrated.** Third, builders should have their airplane evaluated by mechanics who have expertise in their type of aircraft. Fourth, pilots should consider using a qualified test pilot to evaluate the flight characteristics of their airplane.