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## **The Condition Inspection**

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Pilots all know that every aircraft registered in the United States requires an Annual Inspection once every 12 calendar months. Does this requirement apply to amateur-built aircraft as well? If so, what does this inspection consist of, and who can do it?

First of all, Amateur built aircraft also have a requirement for an inspection every 12 calendar months, but it is not called an "Annual Inspection." It is called a "Condition Inspection" and is somewhat like an Annual, but there are differences. For example, an Annual Inspection must be done by an appropriately licensed aircraft mechanic. This means an individual who holds a license with an Airframe and Powerplant rating and an Inspection Authorization (A&P with IA). A "Condition Inspection" on an amateur built aircraft, however, can be done by any A&P (no IA required) or by the builder of the aircraft if he or she has applied for the "Repairman's Certificate." This certificate is like having IA privileges for that specific aircraft only. After all, if you built the aircraft, you should know enough about it to be able to determine if it is in a condition for safe operation.

Another difference is the logbook entry. Both inspections require an entry into the aircraft maintenance records. The wording for an Annual Inspection comes from 14 CFR Part 43. The wording for a Condition Inspection, however, is different, and comes from the Aircraft's Operating Limitations, which are issued to the aircraft as a part of its airworthiness certificate. If a homebuilder has a local A&P do the Condition Inspection, it's important to provide him or her with the operating limitations so that the correct entry can be made in the aircraft's records.

The actual inspections are basically the same. Those of us flying certificated aircraft probably have factory-provided checklists for the Annual. Piper, Moony, Cessna, etc. all supply checklists for Annual Inspections. But what about us homebuilders? I know some kit manufacturers provide checklists for their products, but for the most part, we're "on our own". Not to worry, the "Friendly Aviation Administration (FAA)" has taken care of us. Appendix D to 14 CFR Part 43 (available at [www.faa.gov](http://www.faa.gov)) is a list of the minimum items that must be included on a 100 hour, Annual or Condition Inspection. Note that this is the minimum. You will want to use this document as a starting point and expand your checklist to cover the specifics of your aircraft. In fact, you will probably add items from time to time as you discover issues or hear of issues others are having with similar aircraft. 14 CFR part 43 requires a mechanic to use a checklist for an Annual. This regulation does not apply to homebuilders, but the operating limitations still require the aircraft to be inspected at least in accordance with the scope and detail of appendix D to Part 43. Build a checklist and use it every time you do a Condition Inspection. This will prevent missed items and maybe save your life.