

IGC Sporting Code Committee

Regarding the proposal to remove the need for periodical calibration of flight recorders

This proposal was presented to the 2021 Plenary under the category “Other Proposals”. Our committee argued against the proposal as did GFAC; however, their and our arguments were ignored. The proposal has been submitted again as a Year-2 proposal.

The GFAC have the responsibility to control the technical requirements of IGC Flight Recorders, and the Plenary should follow their expertise. The Sporting Code committee fully supports the GFAC position on future Pressure Altitude calibrations.

Much of the reasoning in the Y1 proposal had no evidence to support it. This has not changed in the Y2 version. For example, here is text from the Y2 proposal (in italics):

A less than 5-year-old calibration certificate is now required even for a simple badge.

The term “simple badge” is not defined by the proposers but, assuming Silver & Gold are intended, this statement is not true. Refer to SC3-2021 Paragraph 2.4.3c (my bold):

If PR barometric data is not available or the FR calibration period has lapsed, **GPS height data may be used for Silver and Gold claims**, provided that a 100 metre error margin is applied to all pressure height requirements of the Code (example: the gain of height is at least 1100 metres for Silver altitude).

It is very difficult to get such a proper document. It leads to many side effects:

It is not difficult at all. Most FR manufacturers are located within the European Union and it is easy to send an FR to them from within the EU – including the countries of the proposers). Additionally, there are private labs at least in Germany (Akaflieg Stuttgart), in the UK & the USA.

It leads to many side effects: Fewer badges or records submitted. No evidence is given. calibration certificate with a variable or untrusted precision, etc. No evidence is given.

Moreover, the data in the calibration certificates are rarely used even in a WGC.

For badges, see SC3-2021 paragraph 2.4.3a:

The pressure altitude evidence is to be corrected using the calibration chart data when the precise altitude is critical to the claim.

Within the DAeC (arguably the largest NAC) calibration data is used to correct the pressure altitude when analysing all FAI and national claims for Diamonds, Diploma &

Records. This is straightforward when using **Claim Check** (www.badgeflight.com) for the analysis (written by a member of the Sporting Code Committee).

Last but not least, manufacturers having a long-term experience report that the pressure sensors don't drift. If they work, they work fine.

This statement cannot be supported as GFAC has evidence that drift certainly does happen over time.

In conclusion, the Sporting Code Committee strongly opposes removal of periodic FR calibration and object to the attempt to bypass the standard Year-1 / Year-2 process that occurred during the Plenary 2021 meeting.

14 February 2022