

SELECTING YOUR INSURANCE AGENT

One of the most important decisions you must make when purchasing your aviation insurance is the proper selection of your agent/broker representative. This individual must coach you on current market trends, help select an underwriting facility that most closely meets your needs, and assist in shopping or negotiating coverages and premiums. That makes the agent sound pretty important to your purchasing power. Egotistically, I like to think agents do make a real difference.

So how do you select an agent? I would suggest it is a bit like hiring a new employee. First of all, the candidate must have the right credentials. Not every agent knows and understands all areas of insurance. If you are dealing with a general property and casualty agent that has little or no knowledge of aviation or if your agent is depending upon a third party to broker the risk to the underwriting facility, you may need to look elsewhere for an agent.

What you should be looking for is an agent that deals with aviation clients all day every day. You should select an agent that holds contracts directly with the underwriting facilities and doesn't need to broker your account. Further, your agent should have a good working relationship with the entire marketplace and not just a narrow segment.

Select your agent in much the same way as you would go about recruiting and qualifying a new employee. Ask for referrals from other aircraft owners, from your FBO, a local charter facility or other aviation professionals. Look for an agent that not only helps in the procurement of your insurance but one that offers value added service as well. Reviewing your contracts from a risk management and insurance standpoint can add dimension which can balance what your attorney can offer. A good aviation insurance specialist can be of great assistance in guiding you through the maze of decisions that you must make including limits and values. To this end, a generalist (a general property and casualty agent) could not be of much help in these areas if he is not an aviation specialist.