Federal Aviation Administration, DOT

§ 27.963 Fuel tanks: general.

(a) Each fuel tank must be able to withstand, without failure, the vibration, inertia, fluid, and structural loads to which it may be subjected in operation.

(b) Each fuel tank of 10 gallons or greater capacity must have internal baffles, or must have external support to resist surging.

(c) Each fuel tank must be separated from the engine compartment by a firewall. At least one-half inch of clear airspace must be provided between the tank and the firewall.

(d) Spaces adjacent to the surfaces of fuel tanks must be ventilated so that fumes cannot accumulate in the tank compartment in case of leakage. If two or more tanks have interconnected outlets, they must be considered as one tank, and the airspaces in those tanks must be interconnected to prevent the flow of fuel from one tank to another as a result of a difference in pressure between those airspaces.

(e) The maximum exposed surface temperature of any component in the fuel tank must be less, by a safe margin as determined by the Administrator, than the lowest expected autoignition temperature of the fuel or fuel vapor in the tank. Compliance with this requirement must be shown under all operating conditions and under all failure or malfunction conditions of all components inside the tank.

(f) Each fuel tank installed in personnel compartments must be isolated by fume-proof and fuel-proof enclosures that are drained and vented to the exterior of the rotorcraft. The design and construction of the enclosures must provide necessary protection for the tank, must be crash resistant during a survivable impact in accordance with §27.952, and must be adequate to withstand loads and abrasions to be expected in personnel compartments.

(g) Each flexible fuel tank bladder or liner must be approved or shown to be suitable for the particular application and must be puncture resistant. Puncture resistance must be shown by meeting the TSO-C80, paragraph 16.0, requirements using a minimum puncture force of 370 pounds.

(h) Each integral fuel tank must have provisions for inspection and repair of its interior.


§ 27.965 Fuel tank tests.

(a) Each fuel tank must be able to withstand the applicable pressure tests in this section without failure or leakage. If practicable, test pressures may be applied in a manner simulating the pressure distribution in service.

(b) Each conventional metal tank, nonmetallic tank with walls that are not supported by the rotorcraft structure, and integral tank must be subjected to a pressure of 3.5 p.s.i. unless the pressure developed during maximum limit acceleration or emergency deceleration with a full tank exceeds this value, in which case a hydrostatic head, or equivalent test, must be applied to duplicate the acceleration loads as far as possible. However, the pressure need not exceed 3.5 p.s.i. on surfaces not exposed to the acceleration loading.

(c) Each nonmetallic tank with walls supported by the rotorcraft structure must be subjected to the following tests:

(1) A pressure test of at least 2.0 p.s.i. This test may be conducted on the tank alone in conjunction with the test specified in paragraph (c)(2) of this section.

(2) A pressure test, with the tank mounted in the rotorcraft structure, equal to the load developed by the reaction of the contents, with the tank
§ 27.967 Fuel tank installation.

(a) Each fuel tank must be supported so that tank loads are not concentrated on unsupported tank surfaces. In addition—

(1) There must be pads, if necessary, to prevent chafing between each tank and its supports;

(2) The padding must be non-absorbent or treated to prevent the absorption of fuel;

(3) If flexible tank liners are used, they must be supported so that it is not necessary for them to withstand fluid loads; and

(4) Each interior surface of tank compartments must be smooth and free of projections that could cause wear of the liner unless—
   (i) There are means for protection of the liner at those points; or
   (ii) The construction of the liner itself provides such protection.

(b) Any spaces adjacent to tank surfaces must be adequately ventilated to avoid accumulation of fuel or fumes in those spaces due to minor leakage. If the tank is in a sealed compartment, ventilation may be limited to drain holes that prevent clogging and excessive pressure resulting from altitude changes. If flexible tank liners are installed, the venting arrangement for the spaces between the liner and its container must maintain the proper relationship to tank vent pressures for any expected flight condition.

(c) The location of each tank must meet the requirements of §27.1185 (a) and (c).

(d) No rotorcraft skin immediately adjacent to a major air outlet from the engine compartment may act as the wall of the integral tank.