

35988 1000
Federal Aviation Agency

ADVISORY CIRCULAR

AC NO : AC 20-13A

AIRCRAFT

EFFECTIVE :

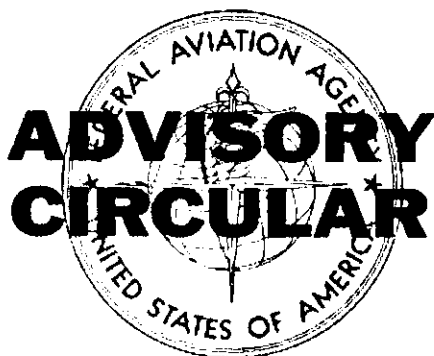
8/28/64

SUBJECT : SURFACE-EFFECT VEHICLES

1. PURPOSE. This circular states Agency policy on the question whether surface-effect vehicles (those that derive their support from a cushion of compressed air) are aircraft as defined by the Federal Aviation Act of 1958.
2. CANCELLATION. Advisory Circular 20-13 dated November 4, 1963.
3. BACKGROUND. The Federal Aviation Act of 1958 defines an aircraft as "any contrivance now known or hereafter invented, used, or designed for navigation of or flight in the air." If the contrivance is an aircraft under this definition, its operation is subject to various Agency regulations. In recent years, several surface-effect vehicles have been constructed, raising the question whether such vehicles are aircraft.
4. AGENCY POLICY. At present, surface-effect vehicles are in an early stage of development and appear to be more comparable to ground or marine vehicles than to aircraft. However, since their ultimate possibilities are not known, it would be premature to permanently disclaim FAA jurisdiction over them. For the present only, therefore, the Agency's policy is that any vehicle deriving support from a cushion of air between the vehicle and the surface (ground or water), and incapable of flight outside of this surface-effect reaction, is not an "aircraft" and need not be registered, certificated, nor operated in accordance with Agency regulations.


George S. Moore
Director
Flight Standards Service

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