

Cessna 401 Model Guide

The Cessna 401 is a piston twin-engine aircraft built from 1966 to 1972 and seating 6 to 8. The registry lists the 401 family as 401, 401A and 401B, with up to 1260 nm range, 213 kt cruise and a 27000 ft service ceiling. Those are maxima across variants, not figures for every airplane. The source documents here focus on exhaust and cabin heater inspection.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Piston twin built 1966 to 1972, seating 6 to 8. Family variants are 401, 401A and 401B.
- Family-level maxima: up to 1260 nm range, 213 kt cruise, 27000 ft ceiling. Confirm the individual airplane's own manual figures.
- Turbocharged exhaust systems fall under AD 2000-01-16: recurring inspections, plus removal for overhaul at 2500 hrs or 12 years.
- A 2012 fatal NTSB accident involved a Cessna 401 cabin heater fire. Verify the heater's logbook history.

EXHAUST SYSTEM (AD 2000-01-16)

The exhaust chart for the 401 A, B with TCM TSIO-520-B engine cites AD 2000-01-16, which applies to all serial numbers. Visual inspection is every 50 hrs or 30 days. Tailpipe removal and inspection and a pressure test are every 12 months. V-band clamps are replaced every 500 hrs. The exhaust is removed from the slip-joints aft to the turbo components every 2500 hrs or 12 years, whichever comes first.

CABIN HEATER HISTORY

NTSB report CEN12FA290 covers a 1967 Cessna 401 (serial 401-0123) with turbo-charged, fuel injected, 300-horsepower TSIO-520-E engines. Leaks at weld points on the heater combustion chamber led to an inflight fire and smoke. The logbook showed the heater inoperative at annual, with no entry returning it to service. The NTSB noted that this heater unit had no calendar time limit for periodic inspection.

WHAT TO CHECK BEFORE BUYING

Review the logbooks for heater return-to-service entries, overheat events and pressure testing. The owner's manual says the heater must be thoroughly checked before the overheat switch is reset. The switch is in the right forward nose compartment, and the light means air in the heater exceeded 325 degrees Fahrenheit. Also confirm exhaust AD compliance records and the condition of tailpipes and turbo headers.

SPECIFICATIONS

Production Start Year	1966
Production End Year	1972
Seats Min	6
Seats Max	8
Engine Power Hp	300

PERFORMANCE

Family Max Range Nm	1260
Family Max Cruise Speed Kt	213
Family Max Service Ceiling Ft	27000

SAFETY NOTES

- Do not reset the heater overheat switch without finding the cause first. The manual requires a thorough check.
- Do not fly with a heater that is inoperative or lacks a return-to-service entry. This preceded a fatal fire and smoke event.
- Inspect tailpipes for internal pitting and thin walls at the outside radius and support bracket, and turbo headers for cracks.