

NORTH AMERICAN P-51D Model Guide

The NORTH AMERICAN P-51D is a single-seat, single-engine piston aircraft from North American. The registry lists it in a family that includes the P-51C and P-51K. That family reaches up to 250 kt cruise, 700 nm range and a 46000 ft ceiling. The supplied data has no variant-specific specs, so a buyer's checks should focus on the flight control system inspections in the service bulletin.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Family-level registry maxima (not P-51D figures): up to 250 kt cruise, 700 nm range, 46000 ft ceiling, 1 occupant.
- Service Bulletin P51-001 warns that failure to comply could cause loss of control. It applies to the P-51D.
- The bulletin's repeat inspection is every 100 hours of operation or 12 months, whichever occurs first.
- Check for aircraft assembled from spare parts. Mixed parts make serial-number compliance with the technical orders questionable.

SAFETY NOTES

- Worn or non-structural hardware at the trim tab hinges has caused a loss of control. Inspect all three hinge fittings on each elevator, aileron and rudder trim tab.
- The elevator inertia weight prevents reversal of stick forces in maneuvers. Confirm it is installed and unmodified.
- Report defects found during these inspections on FAA form 8010-4 to your FSDO.

TRIM TAB AND HARDWARE INSPECTION

Service Bulletin P51-001 followed an elevator trim tab failure and loss of control on a P-51. Contributing factors were worn fiber lock spline nuts at the trim tab hinge fittings and non-structural screws. Some aircraft still had original spline nuts more than 60 years old. Inspect phenolic trim tabs for deterioration or delamination.

LIMITS AND CHECKS IN THE BULLETIN

Replace self-locking nuts if a screw can be removed by hand or with under 3 inch-pounds of drag. Trim tab free play must not exceed 3/32-inch. The elevator inertia weight should weigh 20.75 +/- .5 lbs and be unmodified. Check that the airspeed gauge is marked in MPH, and that the dorsal fin and reverse rudder boost tab (TO 01-60-JE-8) are installed.

PAPERWORK AND CERTIFICATION

Cal Pacific Airmotive holds Limited Type Certificate LTC-11 for the P-51B, C, D, K, F-51D and F-51K. It recommends the bulletin for all P-51 and TF-51 aircraft, including experimental ones. Modifications require FSDO approval. Supplement No. 1 corrects the aileron trim tab screw to the NAS221 series, 10-32 thread.