



FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION
ATO-P Human Factors R&D (Room 907)
800 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20591

Tel: 202-267-8758
Fax: 202-267-5797
william.krebs@faa.gov

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From: General Aviation Human Factors Research, Program Manager

To: General Aviation TCRG

Subj: Designated Pilot Examiner Execution Plan

Ref: Federal Aviation Administration 2004-2008 Flight Plan, Objective 2, Increased Safety Goal

1. Per reference, the FAA's General Aviation and Commercial Division (AFS-800) plans to improve the Designated Pilot Examiner (DPE) program. AFS-800 needs guidance to determine whether DPE's are conducting valid and effective practical tests. A survey will be conducted to determine the effectiveness of the examiner oversight program, which may result in corrective intervention strategies and how these strategies may impact the proposed changes.
2. Title 49 of the United States Code chapter 447 section 44702 (d) authorizes the Administrator to delegate to a qualified private person, or to an employee under the supervision of that person, a matter related to the examination, testing, and inspection necessary to issue a certificate under this chapter as well as issuing the certificate. Subsequently 14 CFR part 183 provides the Administrator with the requirements for designating those private persons. The DPE administers a practical test to evaluate the examinee's (pilot) knowledge and skill to perform a task. When the DPE evaluates knowledge there should be 1) an adequate coverage of the knowledge domains, 2) consistency in the level of difficulty of questions across domains, 3) consistency in how the questions are presented, and 4) consistency in examiner knowledge of the goals of the examination. Problems arise when the DPEs are not consistent in the way they conduct practical tests. The variance could occur between examinees or within an examination – or between DPEs.
3. The objective of this research will be to determine the extent of pilot examiner compliance with the pilot certification requirements of 14 CFR Part 61, the Practical Test Standards and FAA policy. To accomplish this objective, the following tasks will be performed:
 1. A general aviation private pilot national survey will be administered to all newly certified General Aviation Airplane Single-Engine Land (ASEL) private pilots.

2. In an attempt to maximize response rates, the survey will have an attached cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey and asking for their feedback regarding their flight training and testing experiences.
3. Pilots should complete the survey as soon as possible after the practical test.
 - i. Guidance to determine whether DPE's are conducting valid and effective practical tests will be ascertained.
 - ii. The survey results may determine the effectiveness of the examiner oversight program, develop corrective intervention strategies, and document the impact of those changes.
4. In order to provide a balanced perspective of the practical test standard process of airplane single-engine land certification, we propose that DPEs be given the opportunity to comment on the process as well. A Designated Pilot Examiner survey will be administered to all Designated Pilot Examiners across the United States. Results of this survey and the National GA Pilot Survey will be used to determine the need for additional DPE training and/or oversight.
5. Designated Pilot Examiners across the United States will receive an anonymous and voluntary survey with postage-paid return envelopes to complete and return by mail. In an attempt to maximize response rates, the survey will have an attached cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey and asking for their feedback regarding their examination practices.

General Aviation Private Pilot National Survey Technical Approach: Newly certified GA ASEL private pilots from all Flight Standards District Offices (FSDOs) across FAA regions will receive an anonymous and voluntary survey to complete and return by mail. The FSDOs will mail traditionally registered GA ASEL pilots a survey to their home addresses. In addition, CAMI will mail out surveys to ASEL pilots registered through the Integrated Airmen Certificate and/or Rating Application (IACRA) database. In an attempt to maximize response rates, the survey will have an attached cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey asking for their feedback regarding their flight training and testing experiences. The letter will explain the importance of their feedback in improving the quality of flight testing and training. They will be assured that the survey is completely anonymous and voluntary and that if any of the questions make them feel uncomfortable, they should skip them. Returned surveys will be scanned into a database through the use of Teleform software. Summary reports will be created for each region that has at least eight respondents. In addition, an overall report will be created.

Approach: Returned surveys will be scanned into a database through the use of Teleform software. CAMI will deliver summary data reports (i.e., item by item frequency

distributions) for each region that has at least eight respondents. CAMI will also provide an overall data summary report.

DPE Survey Technical Approach: A Designated Pilot Examiner survey will be administered to all Designated Pilot Examiners across the United States. There are approximately 1,066 private persons designated as pilot examiners by the FAA Administrator. CAMI will mail all DPEs a survey with a postage-paid return envelope. In an attempt to maximize response rates, the survey will have an attached cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey and asking for their feedback regarding their examination practices. Names, addresses, and respective FAA regions of each DPE will be obtained from Airman Records.

Approach: Returned surveys will be scanned into a database through the use of Teleform software. CAMI will deliver summary data reports (i.e., item by item frequency distributions) for each region that has at least eight respondents. CAMI will also provide an overall data summary report.

Deliverables:

- Summary data reports (i.e., item by item frequency distributions) for each survey by each region that has at least eight respondents.
- Annual report, five-page document that conforms to ATO-P Human Factors standards.
- Quarterly (December, March, June, and September) research status reports.

Schedule:

Finalize national pilot survey instrument	July 30, 2004
Identify SMEs to assist with DPE survey development	Aug 30, 2004
Identify POCs and establish data collection protocol	Oct. 30, 2004
Finalize DPE survey instrument	Dec 1, 2004
Establish DPE data collection protocol	Dec 15, 2004
Receive OMB approval (pilot survey)	Jan. 30, 2005
Distribute surveys (pilot survey)	April 2005
Distribute DPE surveys	May 2005
Preliminary results (pilot survey)	August 2005
Preliminary DPE results	August 2005

William K. Krebs