

SECTION 11. BASE INSPECTIONS (PTRS CODE 1616)

315. GENERAL. This section contains direction and guidance to be used by principal operation inspectors (POI's) for conducting base inspections. A base inspection is conducted for on-demand air taxi operators, single pilot operators, basic 135 operators, commercial operators and single-based supplemental operators. Operators must meet the same minimum requirements during a base inspection as they do for original certification.

NOTE: A more effective way for the FAA to inspect Part 121 operators and Part 135 commuter operators, rather than by conducting base inspections, is for the FAA to establish a series of specific, independent inspections predicated on the environmental information for the operator at each particular location.

317. DEFINITION. A base inspection is an important surveillance function which provides the FAA with a comprehensive review of all of an operator's activities. It can encompass, in a single inspection, some or all of the specific inspection areas that are described in chapter 2 of this volume.

319. LOCATION OF INSPECTION. A base is usually conducted at the operator's main base of operations or place of business. In some cases, operators may elect to retain selected records at different locations, such as at an office located in a residence, at an office building, or in portable files. The locations may differ as widely as the operator's activities differ.

321. PLANNING A BASE INSPECTION. The method used to conduct a base inspection depends on the organizational structure of the operator at a specific location as identified in the Vital Information Subsystem (VIS) or in the environmental file.

A. Surveillance Activities. The size and complexity of the operations at a particular location will dictate which surveillance items are to be examined during a base inspection. A base inspection may be completed over several days or during a single visit and may often be conducted in conjunction with a proficiency or competency check. When possible, airworthiness and operations inspectors should jointly conduct base inspections.

B. Frequency. The frequency of base inspections for an operator is determined by the number of aircraft and personnel employed by the operator and by the complexity of the operation.

(1) Base inspections are usually conducted as part of the annual work program.

(2) Additional inspections may be initiated by the certificate-holding district office (CHDO) in response to complaints or special emphasis items directed by FAA regional or headquarters personnel.

323. INSPECTION PREPARATION. Prior to conducting a base inspection, the inspector should review the operator's district office file, the VIS, the Program Tracking and Reporting Subsystem (PTRS), and the Aviation Safety Analysis System (ASAS) to become familiar with the following information:

- Current and appropriate air carrier or operating certificate
- Current and appropriate operations specifications (OpSpecs)
- General correspondence with the operator
- Previous inspections and proficiency check records for possible problem areas, accident history, violation history
- Any applicable manuals

NOTE: Single pilot operators are not required to have a manual, although some may elect to have one. A basic Part 135 operator may not have all the required parts of a manual if the CHDO has granted to the operator a deviation from this requirement.

325. NOTIFICATION OF INSPECTION. The inspector should notify the operator to arrange a time when the appropriate personnel and aircraft will be available for the inspection. Notification is important if the inspector plans to interview company personnel. In some cases, notification

may be necessary for the inspector to locate some operators, such as single operators or other small operators. After the operator has been notified of the impending base inspection, the inspector should open a PTRS record, using Aide 1616, and record the notification.

327. CONDUCT OF INSPECTION. The strategy used by an inspector for accomplishing a base inspection depends on the size and complexity of the operator. Because operators conduct business in a variety of ways, it is not necessary to identify each item that must be examined during a base inspection. The job aid in figure 6.2.11.1. (TBD) will aid the inspector in accomplishing a base inspection and can be used to record the results in the PTRS. To complete a base inspection, inspectors should examine, as a minimum, the items that follow:

A. *Operating Certificate.* The inspector should examine the operator's original operating certificate, particularly the date and certificate number, and determine whether or not it matches the office copy. If the original operating certificate is not available, the inspector should determine its location and schedule a time to inspect it.

B. *OpSpecs.* The inspector should review the operator's current OpSpecs and ensure that the issue date is the same as that of the CHDO's copy. If the original OpSpecs are not available, the inspector should determine their location and schedule a time to inspect them.

C. *Operations Manual.* If the operator has either partial or full manuals that provide guidance for flight or ground personnel, the inspector should complete an inspection of the manuals, as applicable.

(1) When the operator does not have a manual, or when there is only a part of a manual, the inspector should determine whether or not the operator has deviation authority by OpSpecs.

(2) The inspector should determine whether or not manual procedures are being followed by interviewing operator personnel or by observing employees in the performance of their duties.

D. *Records.* The inspector should conduct the following records inspections by using the applicable guidance provided in this handbook:

- Trip records (see volume 6, chapter 2, section 20)
- Flight and duty time records (see volume 6, chapter 2, section 10 (TBD))
- Training records (see volume 6, chapter 2, section 9)
- Operations records (see volume 6, chapter 2, section 20)

E. *Aircraft.* If practical, the inspector should examine, during a base inspection, the aircraft used by the operator. In addition to inspecting the aircraft to determine whether or not it is in airworthy condition, the inspector should examine the following items for compliance:

- Airworthiness certificate and registration
- Airplane limitations and required placards
- Approved aircraft flight manual (AFM) or company flight manual (CFM) carried on board
- Empty weight and center of gravity (CG) calculated

NOTE: Multiengine aircraft that are operated under Part 135 must be weighed each 36 months.

- Instruments and equipment
- Operable required equipment (unless an airworthiness directive (AD) provides otherwise)
- The approved minimum equipment list (MEL) and its use as authorized by the OpSpecs (if applicable)
- Aircraft records available for inspection

NOTE: Some operators may elect to retain aircraft maintenance records at the location where maintenance is performed; this location may differ from the operator's main base of operations.

329. DEBRIEFING. The inspector should plan to debrief

the operator as part of the base inspection. Quite often the operator may have participated directly in the inspection and may have the capability to make corrections quickly. The following debriefing points apply:

A. The debriefing should include both compliance and noncompliance areas. If a potential violation is involved, the inspector should advise the operator that a letter of investigation (LOI) will follow.

B. The inspector must be clear when indicating any areas which the operator must correct before further operations can be conducted.

C. The inspector should advise the operator that a formal letter containing a listing of the discrepancies will be sent to the operator and made part of the permanent file.

331. PTRS INPUT. The inspector should record the results of the base inspection in the PTRS by using activity code 1616. The entry should include, in the comment

section (IV), any discrepancies, and significant findings, any corrective action taken by the operator, and any information that may be useful for the inspector to review before conducting the operator's next base inspection.

333. FUTURE ACTIVITIES. By conducting base inspections, the FAA is able to maintain a comprehensive review of an operator's business conduct and its compliance with the FAR's. These inspections often result in findings which generate followup action. If the findings warrant such action, the inspector should implement the following corrective measures:

- Surveillance to verify the operator's correction of discrepancies
- An adjustment of the operator's planned work program
- The initiation of an enforcement investigation report, if applicable.

334.-344. RESERVED.

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