

## CHAPTER 31. ISSUE/RENEW/RESCIND A STATEMENT OF ACROBATIC COMPETENCY

### SECTION 1. BACKGROUND

#### 1. PROGRAM TRACKING AND REPORTING SUBSYSTEM (PTRS) ACTIVITY CODE: 1578

**2. OBJECTIVE.** The main objective of this task is to determine whether to issue an FAA Form 8710-7, Statement of Acrobatic Competency (figure 31-1) to an applicant. Completion of this task results in the issuance, denial, or in some cases the rescission, of a Statement of Acrobatic Competency.

#### 3. GENERAL.

**NOTE: As per volume 1, chapter 1, section 2, page 1-7, paragraph 3 of this handbook, no regional supplements to aviation event policy are permitted.**

*A. Requirements.* By Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) policy, a pilot who wishes to perform aerobatics or certain other flight operations at a public aviation event (airshow) must possess a valid FAA Form 8710-7, or Transport Canada Aviation (TCA), Form 26-0307, Statement of Aerobatic Competency.

(1) This requirement is enforced by the special provisions that are part of the FAA Form 7711-1, Certificate of Waiver or Authorization, issued by the FAA for the event.

(2) A pilot obtains an FAA Form 8710-7 by successfully completing an aerobatic competency evaluation in accordance with the provisions of an FAA-accepted, industry aerobatic competency evaluation program and given by an industry-approved aerobatic competency evaluator.

#### *B. Aerobatic Competency Evaluation Program.*

The aerobatic competency evaluation program has been in use for several years.

(1) In the past, most pilots found it advantageous to simply go to the local FAA district office for an annual evaluation or renewal instead of using an

industry evaluator for peer review and recommendations.

(2) FAA found it necessary to appoint inspectors in each office to conduct these evaluations. However, the FAA was not always able to designate an adequately trained inspector who had related experience. Consequently, flight evaluations were sometimes inequitable.

(3) Efforts to correct these inadequacies revealed that it was not cost-effective to attempt a nationwide training program for inspectors in this specific task, because of the relatively low demand for the evaluation.

(4) Other safeguards built into the airshow environment have prevented the public from being placed at any undue risk. However, 12 performing pilots suffered fatal accidents within one year. Although the number of accidents was generally no greater than in previous years, and many of the accidents did not take place at an airshow, the accidents did appear to be related to aerobatic competency. These accidents served as a catalyst toward more aggressive evaluation of the aerobatic competency of airshow pilots.

(5) It is generally agreed that the level of safety of any segment of the industry is critically dependent upon that industry's assuming responsibility for itself and its safety programs. In this instance, the airshow industry was very proactive in its steps to alleviate future events that would reflect negatively on general aviation. Within a very short time, two industry groups proposed a revamping of the evaluator program to include new techniques and procedures.

(6) The most encouraging part of the proposed program was that, for the first time, there would be a well-orchestrated program that would directly effect virtually all active airshow pilots in the U.S. and Canada. Moreover, the industry is providing a database of information on airshow pilots and their competency checks. Such a fund of information is unprecedented, and the program far exceeds the FAA's

capabilities for action in light of other priorities. This action will significantly advance airshow safety with little cost to the public.

(7) The FAA is convinced that industry evaluators are people who are credible and dedicated to fulfilling their duties to conduct peer review, counsel, and make appropriate recommendations to the FAA.

**NOTE: The terms aerobic and acrobatic are synonymous.**

**4. AEROBATIC COMPETENCY.** In order for a pilot of a civil aircraft to perform aerobic and certain other maneuvers at air shows authorized by FAA Form 7711-1, Certificate of Waiver or Authorization, the pilot must have a valid FAA Form 8710-7, Statement of Acrobatic Competency, or a TCA Form 26-0307, Statement of Aerobic Competency, in his/her possession.

*A. Validity.* Either of these forms must have been issued within time frames set forth in the industry program, or as directed by AFS-800.

*B. Not Required.* FAA Form 8710-7 is not required if a pilot is competing in an aerobic contest that is not associated with an airshow, if a pilot is practicing in an aerobic practice area authorized by FAA Form 7711-1 for that specific purpose, or for closed course air racing.

*C. Aerobic Flight Demonstrations.* Individuals requiring a Statement of Acrobatic Competency will be referred to an industry evaluator such as those designated by the International Council of Air Shows, Inc. (ICAS) or the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Warbirds of America. An aerobic competency evaluator (ACE) will forward a written recommendation to the FAA district office through the appropriate organization. The ACE will also recommend standard limitations to an individual's Statement of Acrobatic Competency based upon observed performance (figure 31-2).

*D. Rotorcraft.* Aerobic flight demonstrations by rotorcraft are evaluated only by FAA personnel designated by AFS-800. Non-aerobic formation flight in rotorcraft can be evaluated by an industry ACE.

**5. ISSUANCE OF A STATEMENT OF ACROBATIC COMPETENCY.** An inspector issues a Statement of Acrobatic Competency upon an applicant's successful completion of an oral examination and, if required, a flight demonstration. The examination and demonstration are conducted by an industry ACE. The evaluation procedures and policy are devel-

oped by ICAS and the EAA, and subsequently accepted by the FAA. The ICAS ACE manual can be obtained at [www.airshow.org](http://www.airshow.org).

*A. ACE's Role.* After requesting the required information about the pilot from an industry organization, the industry ACE conducts the evaluation. After the evaluation is completed, the industry ACE notes his/her recommendations on the application form.

*B. Application Processing.* Generally, the completed application is forwarded to the industry organization for processing in a timely fashion. The organization records the information, then sends the application to the Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) closest to the applicant's mailing address. Applications from Canadian airmen will be forwarded to the FSDO nearest to the ICAS office for processing. The cover letter should also include a draft card for the applicant.

*C. Application for Issuance/Renewal.* When a copy of the industry application for issuance/renewal is received by the FSDO after the evaluation was completed by an industry ACE, the FAA Form 8710-7 will not be issued to the applicant until completion of the necessary coordination with the appropriate industry group, which is indicated by a cover letter from ICAS or EAA Warbirds with the application or, if the application is received without an industry group cover letter, by contacting ICAS at (301) 519-6800 or EAA Warbirds at (414) 426-4874 for confirmation. Also, in those rare instances when the evaluation is conducted by an ACE inspector, FAA Form 8710-7 will not be issued to the applicant until the ACE inspector has completed the necessary coordination and background records review with ICAS who maintains records on all individuals who hold FAA Form 8710-7. FAA inspectors who are not designated as ACE inspectors will not conduct aerobic competency evaluations. Inspectors who are designated as ACE inspectors may in rare instances conduct aerobic evaluation and subsequently issue FAA Form 8710-7 only after receiving prior approval from the Flight Standards division in the appropriate regional office and coordinating with ICAS. In such a case, they will follow all procedures and adhere to all requirements of one of the industry evaluation programs.

*D. Reissuance or Renewal.* An evaluation by an ACE is required for reissuance or renewal of a Statement of Acrobatic Competency.

*E. Forms.* FAA Form 8710-7 (figure 31-1) is used to issue a Statement of Acrobatic Competency. This form expires in accordance with industry guidelines.

*F. Limitations and Authorized Aircraft.* Placement and removal of limitations and authorized aircraft is

based upon recommendations made by the industry ACE during initial or subsequent evaluations.

*G. District Office Considerations.* Applicants for the Statement of Acrobatic Competency may also be applying for a waiver for an aerobatic practice area in a location convenient to the ACE. Each office should be prepared to facilitate the process for obtaining a waiver required to conduct an evaluation. (See volume 2, chapter 48.)

**6. REEVALUATION OF COMPETENCY TO HOLD, AND/OR RESCISSION OF A STATEMENT OF ACROBATIC COMPETENCY.** In accordance with FAA policy, after successful completion of an evaluation, an industry ACE evaluator recommends to the FAA that an FAA Form 8710-7, Statement of Acrobatic Competency, be issued to an airshow performer. Therefore, when safety concerns so dictate, it is also FAA policy that the FAA may require reevaluation of a performer's competency to hold and/or rescind a performer's FAA Form 8710-7.

*A. High Standard of Safety.* These actions are only intended to achieve a high standard of safety by assuring future compliance with FAA safety rules and policy. They are not intended to be punitive, and are separate, apart from, and may not necessarily relate to any enforcement action or the final determination of probable cause of an accident.

(1) Anytime an airshow performer's actions give the FAA, ICAS, or EAA Warbirds of America reason to doubt their aerobatic competency, the performer's competency to hold an FAA Form 8710-7 should be reevaluated and/or rescinded.

(2) When an airshow performer is involved in an accident or incident that occurs during any portion of an airshow routine at a public aviation event conducted in accordance with a FAA Form 7711-1, Certificate of Waiver or Authorization (figure 31-3), the performer's competency to hold a Statement of Acrobatic Competency is in doubt.

(a) An accident or incident is defined by Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations (49 CFR) section 830.

(b) Concerning the definition of "incident" in 49 CFR section 830, special emphasis is placed on the safety and well being of spectators as affected by the "safety of operations."

(3) Any incident that occurs during any portion of an airshow routine that negatively affects the safety

of spectators, regardless of damage or injury, shall be grounds to doubt a performer's aerobatic competency.

(4) In a large part, aerobatic competency as it relates to the issuance of FAA Form 8710-7 equates to airshow performing safely during the performer's entire routine, not just their skill at performing individual aerobatic maneuvers.

*B. Reevaluation of Competency.* Minor incidents such as isolated, momentary transgressions across an assigned show line or below a minimum altitude are not grounds for reevaluation but should be corrected by on-the-spot counseling and constructive criticism.

(1) Mitigating factors such as unforecast winds at altitude, etc. should also be considered. However, if the incident that gave reason to doubt the airman's competency is not of a serious enough nature that would require rescission of the performer's FAA Form 8710-7, it may still be necessary to require reevaluation of the performer's competency to hold the form.

(2) Concerning accidents or incidents at air shows, the FSDO that issued the FAA Form 7711-1 for the event shall, when appropriate, require reevaluation of the performer's competency to hold an FAA Form 8710-7 (figure 31-4). It is important that the performer complete the reevaluation in a reasonable but timely manner.

(3) For all reevaluations, ICAS or the EAA Warbirds will assign an evaluator. AFS-800, ICAS, and in the case of an FAA Form 8710-7 issued on the recommendation of the EAA Warbirds of America, both ICAS and the EAA Warbirds of America shall be notified of the request for reevaluation.

(4) Optionally, the performer can choose to surrender their FAA Form 8710-7. In that case, the surrendered FAA Form 8710-7 and copies of all correspondence shall be forwarded to the issuing FSDO and a copy sent to ICAS.

*C. Rescission of FAA Form 8710-7.* If the incident that gave reason to doubt the airman's competency is of a serious nature, it may be necessary to immediately rescind the performer's FAA Form 8710-7 pending reevaluation (figure 31-5).

(1) Any incident that occurs during any portion of an airshow routine that directly threatens the safety and well-being of spectators, regardless of damage or

injury, shall be grounds to rescind a performer's FAA Form 8710-7.

(2) Any incident that occurs during any portion of an airshow routine that arises from flagrant and willful disregard for FAA safety rules and policy and/or when a performer exhibits an attitude of recidivism concerning FAA safety rules and policy shall also shall be grounds to rescind a performer's FAA Form 8710-7.

(3) Concerning accidents or incidents at air shows, the FSDO that issued the FAA Form 7711-1 for the event shall immediately rescind the performer's FAA Form 8710-7. It is important that this be completed before the next opportunity for the performer to perform at a public event.

(4) Any decision to rescind an FAA Form 8710-7 should be coordinated with the FAA's National Airshow Coordinator in AFS-800.

(5) Also, at the written recommendation of ICAS or EAA Warbirds of America, the FSDO that issued a performer's FAA Form 8710-7 should also rescind it. AFS-800, ICAS, and in the case of an FAA Form 8710-7 issued on the recommendation of the EAA Warbirds of America, both ICAS and the EAA Warbirds of America shall be notified of the rescission.

*D. Appeal.* A performer who has been requested to submit to reevaluation and/or had their FAA

Form 8710-7 rescinded shall have the right to appeal this action in writing to the Division Manager of the General Aviation and Commercial Division, AFS-800, Flight Standard Service, in FAA headquarters, Washington, DC, 20591.

**7. FAA AEROBATIC EVALUATIONS.** All evaluations (initial and reissuance/renewal), except of rotorcraft and occasional checks dictated by unusual situations, must be referred to an industry organization that has developed an acceptable method of making recommendations of aerobatic competency to the FAA.

*A. Rotorcraft Operations.* At present, there are only a limited number of aerobatic rotorcraft operations. Rotorcraft operations are evaluated by FAA personnel approved by FAA headquarters.

*B. FAA Aerobatic Competency Evaluators.* FAA headquarters and regional offices will maintain a roster of FAA personnel who are skilled in evaluating airshow aerobatic competency as determined by the regional Flight Standards division. Occasionally these individuals will be called upon to help resolve unusual problems or situations. However, these evaluators will not conduct routine airshow aerobatic competency evaluations.

**[PAGES 31-5 THRU 31-8 RESERVED]**

## SECTION 2. PROCEDURES

**1. REQUIREMENTS.** The issuance of a Statement of Acrobatic Competency requires an evaluation by an industry ACE such as those designated by ICAS or the EAA Warbirds. Although the evaluation program is administered by the industry, the FAA is the final authority on issuance of a Statement of Acrobatic Competency.

### 2. REFERENCES AND FORMS.

#### A. References.

- Advisory Circular 91-45, Waivers: Aviation Events
- International Council of Airshows ACE Program
- International Council of Airshows ACE Manual
- International Council of Airshows list of ACE's
- Experimental Aircraft Association Warbirds of America ACE Program Letter
- Experimental Aircraft Association Warbirds of America list of ACE's

#### B. Forms.

- FAA Form 8710-1, Airman Certificate and/or Rating Application (figure 31-2)
- FAA Form 8710-7, Statement of Acrobatic Competency (figure 31-1)
- FAA Form 7711-1, Certificate of Waiver or Authorization

### 3. PROCEDURES.

*A. Obtain Application.* An applicant for a Statement of Acrobatic Competency should contact an industry organization to obtain the industry application form. The individual will receive a numbered application form with an instruction sheet covering all necessary procedures. In the rare instance that the evaluation is to be conducted by the FAA, such as a rotorcraft evaluation or an evaluation dictated by an unusual situation and approved by the Flight Standards division in the regional office, an FAA Form 8710-1, Airman Certificate and/or Rating Application, should be appropriately completed by the applicant.

*B. Schedule Evaluation.* With the application, the individual also receives a copy of the checklists that

will be used for the evaluation. The individual contacts an appropriate ACE and schedules the time and location of the examination and demonstration.

*C. FAA's Role.* The local FSDO makes the final decision on each application based on the recommendation of the industry ACE. This office also issues the Statement of Acrobatic Competency, FAA Form 8710-7, to the successful applicant after coordination with the appropriate industry group.

*D. Issue Certificate.* After an application is approved, an inspector issues a Statement of Acrobatic Competency on FAA Form 8710-7. When issuing the certificate, the inspector should:

(1) list recommended maneuvers, altitude limitations, and approved aircraft on the reverse side of the form. (See figures 31-1 and 31-2.) More than one card may be required to list all approved aircraft;

(2) sign and date the form; the form is dated the date of the evaluation and expires in accordance with industry guidelines;

(3) make copies of the form for the office and district office files;

(4) forward the form to the pilot at the address shown in the cover letter. Do not forward a copy to AFS-760, Airman Certification Branch; and

(5) make the appropriate PTRS entry.

**NOTE: Original copies of all evaluation documentation will be retained by ICAS.**

**4. TASK OUTCOMES.** Completion of this task results in issuance, renewal, or denial (figure 31-6) of a Statement of Acrobatic Competency.

### 5. FUTURE ACTIVITIES.

*A.* The inspector could take part in an investigation as a result of an accident, incident, or violation of the regulations, and be called upon to rescind FAA Form 8710-7, or require reevaluation.

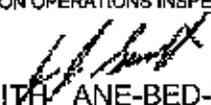
*B.* FAA Form 8710-7 may be rescinded based on the facts, conditions and circumstances of an accident or incident that raises doubt about the pilot's acrobatic competency.

**[THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK]**

**[PAGES 31-11 THRU 31-14 RESERVED]**

**FIGURE 31-1  
FAA FORM 8710-7, STATEMENT OF ACROBATIC COMPETENCY**

FRONT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION  STATEMENT OF ACROBATIC COMPETENCY	
PILOT  <b>J. J. JONES</b>	
TYPE CERTIFICATE/NUMBER  <b>COMMERCIAL 1234567</b>	
ISSUANCE DATE  <b>03-30-96</b>	EXPIRATION DATE  <b>03-31-97</b>
GENERAL AVIATION OPERATIONS INSPECTOR (Signature)   <b>J. J. SMITH ANE-BED-FSDO</b>	

FAA Form 8710-7 (5-78)

BACK

MANEUVER LIMITATIONS  <b>NONE</b>	
ALTITUDE LIMITATIONS  <b>LEVEL II</b>	AUTHORIZED AIRCRAFT  <b>PITTS SPECIAL</b>
I understand that this statement of competency does not authorize deviation from FAR 91 except as defined by waiver thereto, or to the terms of Special Provisions contained in any waiver to FAR 91.	
PILOT (Signature)  	

**FIGURE 31-2**  
**FAA FORM 8710-7 MANEUVER LIMITATIONS**

---

The following is a listing of maneuver limitations for use in completing FAA Form 8710-7, Statement of Acrobatic Competency

A. ICAS Program

1. SOLO AEROBATICS
2. SOLO AEROBATICS - NO SUSTAINED INVERTED FLIGHT
3. FORMATION AEROBATICS
4. FORMATION AEROBATICS - NO INVERTED FLIGHT
5. SOLO AEROBATICS - NO VERTICAL MANEUVERS
6. SOLO AEROBATICS - LOOPS AND ROLLS ONLY/COMBINATIONS THEREOF
7. SOLO AEROBATICS - POSITIVE G MANEUVERS ONLY
8. CIRCLE THE JUMPER
9. NON-AEROBATIC FLIGHT IN AN AEROBATIC FORMATION
10. NIGHT
11. NIGHT PYRO
12. WING WALKING
13. CAR TOP LANDING
14. CAR TO PLANE TRANSFER
15. AERIAL TRANSFER
16. COMEDY
17. DOGFIGHT
18. DEADSTICK
19. INVERTED RIBBON CUT
20. Or as specified by the evaluator, and approved by the industry ACE committee.

B. EAA Warbirds Program (limited to Level 2 or higher)

1. LOOPS
2. ROLLS
3. LOOPS, ROLLS AND ANY COMBINATION THEREOF

**FIGURE 31-3**  
**FAA FORM 7711-1, CERTIFICATE OF WAIVER OR AUTHORIZATION**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION  <b>CERTIFICATE OF WAIVER OR AUTHORIZATION</b>
ISSUED TO
ADDRESS
This certificate is issued for the operations specifically described hereinafter. No person shall conduct any operation pursuant to the authority of this certificate except in accordance with the standard and special provisions contained in this certificate, and such other requirements of the Federal Aviation Regulations not specifically waived by this certificate.
OPERATIONS AUTHORIZED
LIST OF WAIVED REGULATIONS BY SECTION AND TITLE
<b>STANDARD PROVISIONS</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A copy of the application made for this certificate shall be attached to and become a part hereof.</li> <li>2. This certificate shall be presented for inspection upon the request of any authorized representative of the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration, or of any State or municipal official charged with the duty of enforcing local laws or regulations.</li> <li>3. The holder of this certificate shall be responsible for the strict observance of the terms and provisions contained herein.</li> <li>4. This certificate is nontransferable.</li> </ol>
NOTE---This certificate constitutes a waiver of those Federal rules or regulations specifically referred to above. It does not constitute a waiver of any State law or local ordinance.
<b>SPECIAL PROVISIONS</b>
Special Provisions Nos. _____ to _____ inclusive, are set forth on the reverse side hereof. <span style="float: right;">"See Attached" <input type="checkbox"/></span>
This certificate is effective from _____ to _____, inclusive, and is subject to cancellation at any time upon notice by the Administrator or his authorized representative.
BY DIRECTION OF THE ADMINISTRATOR
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%; text-align: center;">           _____            (Region)         </div> <div style="width: 45%; text-align: center;">           _____            (Signature)         </div> </div>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%; text-align: center;">           _____            (Date)         </div> <div style="width: 45%; text-align: center;">           _____            (Title)         </div> </div>

**FIGURE 31-4**  
**LETTER REQUIRING REEVALUATION OF ACROBATIC COMPETENCY**

---

FAA Letterhead

**Certified Mail - Return Receipt Requested**

[*date*]

[*performer's name and address*]

Dear [*performer's name*]:

Investigation of the [*accident/incident*] which occurred at [*location*] on [*date*], gives reason to believe that your competency to hold an FAA Form 8710-7, Statement of Acrobatic Competency, is in question and that reevaluation of your qualification to be the holder of an FAA Form 8710-7 is necessary in the interest of safety. Therefore, pursuant to FAA policy you are requested to arrange for a reevaluation of your qualifications to hold an FAA Form 8710-7 within [*number*] days. An evaluator will be assigned to conduct this reevaluation by the industry organization that recommended the issuance of your current FAA Form 8710-7.

If, for valid reasons beyond your control, you are unable to be reevaluated at this time, please contact [*IIC*] as soon as possible so that a determination can be made as to whether a time extension may be granted.

Upon successful completion of an aerobatic competency evaluation, you may be issued another FAA Form 8710-7, Statement of Acrobatic Competency.

If you will not be conducting airshow performances in the foreseeable future and do not wish to be reevaluated at this time, you can surrender your FAA Form 8710-7, Statement of Acrobatic Competency to this office.

You can appeal this action in writing to the Division Manager, General Aviation and Commercial Division, AFS-800, 800 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC, 20591.

(Please note that the incident which occurred on [*date*] is still under investigation to determine whether enforcement action is appropriate. If enforcement action is to be taken, you will be advised in a separate letter.)

Should you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact this office at [*FSDO telephone number*].

Your cooperation in this matter will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

[*FSDO Manager*]

cc: [*ICAS and/or EAA Warbirds of America*]  
[*National Airshow Coordinator, AFS-802*]

**FIGURE 31-5**  
**LETTER RESCINDING A STATEMENT OF ACROBATIC COMPETENCY**

---

FAA Letterhead

**Certified Mail - Return Receipt Requested**

[*date*]

[*performer's name and address*]

Dear [*performer's name*]:

This letter is to inform you that as of this date, your FAA Form 8710-7, Statement of Acrobatic Competency, is rescinded. Please return your FAA Form 8710-7 to this office at [*FSDO address*].

This rescission is based on [*the recommendation of [ICAS or the EAA Warbirds of America] [the events of [date of accident or incident]]*]. Upon successful completion of an acrobatic competency evaluation, you may be issued another FAA Form 8710-7, Statement of Acrobatic Competency.

You can appeal this action in writing to the Division Manager, General Aviation and Commercial Division, AFS-800, 800 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC, 20591.

(Please note that the incident which occurred on [*date*] is still under investigation to determine whether enforcement action is appropriate. If enforcement action is to be taken, you will be advised in a separate letter.)

Should you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact this office at [*FSDO telephone number*].

Your cooperation in this matter will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

[*FSDO Manager*]

cc: [*ICAS and/or EAA Warbirds of America*]  
[*National Airshow Coordinator, AFS-802*]

**FIGURE 31-6**  
**LETTER DENYING STATEMENT OF ACROBATIC COMPETENCY**

---

FAA Letterhead

[*date*]

[*applicant's name and address*]

Dear [*applicant's name*]:

This letter is to inform you that your application for a Statement of Acrobatic Competency is denied.

The following items were unsatisfactory: (List all that apply under each item.)

Oral Examination

Preflight

Flight Demonstration

Should you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact this office.

Sincerely,

[*inspector who conducted the test*]