



# National Pilot Customer Satisfaction Survey

Flight Standards Service  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Flight Standards Service conducts the Customer Satisfaction to gather “firsthand” information from airmen regarding their satisfaction with the customer service we provide. In 1998, we conducted a survey that included the focus areas of Communication, Aviation Safety Program, Flight Reviews, and Accidents, Incidents and Compliance with 102,000 pilots and aviation maintenance technicians. Though both groups were surveyed simultaneously, this summary report addresses only the national findings of the 1998 survey based on legible responses submitted by 32,338 pilots (35 percent return rate). Findings based on the aviation maintenance technician responses are being analyzed. Overall, Private pilots expressed higher levels of customer satisfaction with the services provided by Flight Standards than did Commercial and Airline Transport Pilots (ATP).

The survey respondents were equally divided between private pilots (50 percent) and Commercial and ATP pilots (50 percent). Of the latter group, 63 percent reported that they received compensation for flying for major airlines (33 percent), flight schools (14 percent), air taxis (14 percent), regional air carriers (9 percent), and corporate businesses (17 percent). Most of the respondents reported being Certificated Flight Instructors (53 percent) or Ground Instructors (24 percent). Eighty-eight percent flew fixed wing aircraft rather than rotorcraft, lighter than air aircraft, or gliders. Fourteen percent of the pilots indicated that they had over 10,000 lifetime flight hours while 5 percent had less than 100 hours.

As an organization, Flight Standards has a continuing interest in the lasting impression that we make on any pilot. We assumed respondents who had contact with a Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) or a member of our workforce within the year prior to the survey would provide information most relevant to our current organization. Therefore, we concentrated attention on their responses as indicators of the customer service we currently provide. Since most of the respondents completed the survey toward the end of 1998, we have used “1998” to refer to this group of pilots.

### **Communication**

The pilots most frequently communicated with Flight Standards through walk-in visits to FSDO’s, phone calls, and unplanned interaction in the field. Eighty-nine percent of all pilot respondents thought Flight Standards personnel treated them with courtesy. In addition, those with contact during 1998 indicated very positive opinions regarding the accuracy (76 percent), timeliness (76 percent), and clarity (80 percent) of information or services provided to them.

The results of the 1993 survey highlighted a lack of standardization when providing information to customers. We have taken corrective actions; however, we must continue to strive for improvement. Twenty-eight percent of those pilots in contact with Flight Standards in 1998 reported having contact with more than one FSDO. This group reported a 7 percent rate of inconsistency in the information provided to them. When different aviation safety inspectors, within either the same or different FSDO’s provided information, 18 percent of the pilots reported inconsistencies. Sixty-three percent of the total respondents recorded that they were unaware that Flight Standards provided technical

## *FLIGHT STANDARDS CUSTOMER SURVEY*

information via the Internet. We assume that this figure has decreased proportionately during the past two years due to the increased public access and use of the Internet.

### **Aviation Safety Program**

The Aviation Safety Program is available to all airmen and provides knowledge of current and new regulatory requirements, technological changes, and changes in safety responsibilities of today's National Airspace System. Less than half of the respondents attended Flight Standards sponsored safety seminars during 1998 while 15 percent attended more than one. Of this 1998 group, 94 percent agreed that the seminars made safer pilots and 81 percent said they would attend future seminars. Forty-six percent of the respondents reported that they participated in the Pilot Proficiency Awards Program with 72 percent of these participants having achieved Level 1-3. Eighteen percent of all respondents knew they could become Aviation Safety Counselors with the greatest rate of participation in this counselor program from Commercial and ATP pilots.

### **Flight Reviews**

Flight reviews verify that a pilot possesses the knowledge, skill, and ability required to operate an aircraft. Pilots receive flight reviews when they first receive a pilot certificate and then on a recurring basis from either a qualified Flight Standards aviation safety inspector or a designated examiner. Forty-four percent of the survey respondents had flight reviews during 1998. Designated examiners tested 32 percent; aviation safety inspectors, 6 percent; and both an inspector and a designated examiner tested 6 percent. Over 90 percent agreed that the person administering the flight review was knowledgeable and familiar with the type of aircraft and operational environment in which the test was conducted. When asked if the person giving the review was courteous, a great majority (96 percent) responded positively.

### **Accidents, Incidents and Compliance**

Only 1 percent reported they were in an aviation accident during 1998 and only 2 percent reported involvement in an incident. Sixty percent of the pilots were neutral in providing input on Flight Standards employees' acting courteously when giving violations. Thirty-three percent agreed that they were courteous and 7 percent disagreed. While 22 percent agreed that a resulting sanction was appropriate, 14 percent indicated the sanction was not appropriate. Sixty-five percent chose to report a neutral response.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of the Customer Satisfaction Survey are assisting Flight Standards to prioritize areas of change based on the information provided to us directly by our customers. As an organization we must not only develop interventions to affect improvement, we must continue to sustain programs and services that meet the needs and expectations of our customers. Survey findings will be compiled specific to our regional and field offices helping us to identify particular areas in which we must improve our customer service. Our commitment to developing interventions and solutions will be documented in performance plans developed annually at the national, regional, and district office levels.