

**The Initial Flight Instructor Practical Test may be conducted by a  
Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Inspector or by an assigned  
Designated Pilot Examiner (DPE)**

Standard FAA policy requires that Initial Certificated Flight Instructor (CFI) practical tests be administered by an FAA Aviation Safety Inspector (ASI). However, the Helena Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) is authorized to delegate Initial CFI practical tests to a Designated Pilot Examiner (DPE) when an ASI is not available.

The following procedure must be followed when an applicant wishes to schedule an Initial CFI practical test. This procedure is intended to provide a practical test with the least possible delay, and to accommodate the selection of an ASI or an authorized DPE, as appropriate.

**Procedure**

1. **Contact the Helena FSDO.** The recommending CFI (not the applicant) should first contact the Front Line Manager for Operations, John D. Russell, to request an initial CFI practical test. Provide the recommending CFI certificate number and phone number, the applicant's name, certificate number, phone number, the aircraft(s) make(s) and model(s), and registration (N) numbers.

IMPORTANT! All requests MUST be directed first to the Front Line Manager for Operations at the Helena FSDO. The process always starts at the FSDO!

2. **Assignment of Duty.** The Front Line Manager will determine if an FAA ASI is available to conduct the practical test in a timely manner. If so, the recommending CFI will be put in touch with the ASI. If no ASI is available, a DPE will be assigned by the FSDO to conduct the test. An ASI normally conducts the Initial CFI practical tests at the Helena FSDO and the applicant is expected to travel to Helena for the test. A DPE may conduct the test at any location. The applicant must provide a suitable aircraft and bear all expense related to accomplishment of the practical test.

IMPORTANT! The recommending CFI must advise the Front Line Manager of the date of the scheduled practical test. A telephone call or e-mail message will suffice for this notification. Requests and questions should be directed to John D. Russell at (406) 449-5270, extension 44, or at [John.Russell@faa.gov](mailto:John.Russell@faa.gov).