

SPECIFICATIONS FOR NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATIONS FOR POTENTIAL NEUROCOGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT

(Updated 01/29/2020)

Why is a neuropsychological evaluation required? Head trauma, stroke, encephalitis, multiple sclerosis, other suspected acquired or developmental conditions, and medications used for treatment, may produce cognitive deficits that would make an airman unsafe to perform pilot duties. This guideline outlines the requirements for a neuropsychological evaluation.

Who may perform a neuropsychological evaluation?

Neuropsychological evaluations should be conducted by a qualified Neuropsychologist with additional training in aviation-specific topics. The following link contains a list of neuropsychologists who meet all FAA quality criteria. See [FAA Neuropsychologist List](#).

Will I need to provide any of my medical records? You should make records available to the neuropsychologist prior to the evaluation, to include:

- Copies of all records regarding prior psychiatric/substance-related hospitalizations, observations or treatment not previously submitted to the FAA.
- A complete copy of your agency medical records. You should request a copy of your agency records be sent **directly** to the psychiatrist and psychologist by submitting a [Request for Airman Medical Records \(FAA Form 8065-2\)](#).

What must the neuropsychological evaluation report include? *At a minimum:*

- A review of all available records, including academic records, records of prior psychiatric hospitalizations, and records of periods of observation or treatment (e.g., psychiatrist, psychologist, or pediatric neuropsychiatrist treatment notes). Records must be in sufficient detail to permit a clear evaluation of the nature and extent of any previous mental disorders.
- A thorough clinical interview to include a detailed history regarding: psychosocial or developmental problems; academic and employment performance; legal issues; substance use/abuse (including treatment and quality of recovery); aviation background and experience; medical conditions, and **all** medication use; and behavioral observations during the interview and testing.
- A mental status examination.
- Interpretation of a full battery of neuropsychological and psychological tests **including, but not limited to**, the “core test battery” (specified below).
- An integrated summary of findings with an explicit diagnostic statement, and the neuropsychologist’s opinion(s) and recommendation(s) regarding

clinically or aeromedically significant findings and the potential impact on aviation safety consistent with the Federal Aviation Regulations.

What is required in the “core test battery?”

To promote test security, itemized lists of tests comprising psychological/neuropsychological test batteries have been moved to a secure site. Authorized professionals should use the portal at [FAA Neuropsychology Testing Specifications](#). For access, email a request to 9-amc-aam-NPTesting@faa.gov.

What must be submitted? The neuropsychologist’s report as specified in the portal, **plus**:

- Copies of all computer score reports; and
- An appended score summary sheet that includes all scores for all tests administered. When available, **pilot norms must be used**. If pilot norms are not available for a particular test, then the normative comparison group (e.g., general population, age/education-corrected) must be specified. Also, when available, percentile scores must be included.

Recommendations should be strictly limited to the psychologist’s area of expertise. **For questions about testing or requirements, email 9-amc-aam-NPTesting@faa.gov.**

What else does the neuropsychologist need to know?

- The FAA will not proceed with a review of the test findings without the above data.
- The data and clinical findings will be carefully safeguarded in accordance with the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (2002) as well as applicable federal law.
- The raw neurocognitive testing data may be required at a future date for expert review by one of the FAA’s consulting clinical neuropsychologists. In that event, authorization for release of the data **by the airman** to the expert reviewer will need to be provided.

Additional Helpful Information

1. Will additional testing be required in the future? If eligible for unrestricted medical certification, no additional testing would be required. However, pilots found eligible for Special Issuance will be required to undergo periodic re-evaluations. The letter authorizing special issuance will outline required testing, which may be limited to specific tests or expanded to include a comprehensive test battery.
2. Useful references for the neuropsychologist:
 - **MOST COMPREHENSIVE SINGLE REFERENCE:**
Aeromedical Psychology (2013). C.H. Kennedy & G.G. Kay (Editors). Ashgate.

- Pilot norms on neurocognitive tests: Kay, G.G. (2002). Guidelines for the Psychological Evaluation of Aircrew Personnel. *Occupational Medicine*, 17 (2), 227-245.
- Aviation-related psychological evaluations: Jones, D. R. (2008). Aerospace Psychiatry. In J. R. Davis, R. Johnson, J. Stepanek & J. A. Fogarty (Eds.), *Fundamentals of Aerospace Medicine (4th Ed.)*, (pp. 406-424). Philadelphia: Lippencott Williams & Wilkins.