

# Qualifications for Becoming a Non-Federally Employed Maintenance Technician

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To ensure that you have the latest version of this document please contact [non-federal-program@faa.gov](mailto:non-federal-program@faa.gov).

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## **Who Should Read this Guide & its Companion FAQ?**

- Anyone interested in working as a non-federally employed maintenance technician.
- FAA personnel involved with the inspection of non-federal systems.

## **Contact the Non-Federal Program Before Pursuing Verification Authority.**

Technicians should [contact their Non-Federal Program Liaison](#) (also known as FAA Non-Federal Program Implementation Managers, or “PIMs”) *before* investing time and resources pursuing verification authority. Contact information is available via the link above, and at [www.FAA.gov/Go/NonFed](http://www.FAA.gov/Go/NonFed).

**What is “Verification Authority?”** The FAA has rigorous standards for the maintenance of non-federally owned systems. Individuals who want to maintain these systems must show that they have the qualifications to do so. Once they satisfy the FAA's requirements the agency will issue “verification authority.” (The name refers to the fact that the FAA is authorizing a technician to officially *verify* that a system is operating safely and maintained per FAA standards.) Technicians must have FAA-issued verification authority for every type/make/model system that they maintain. The FAA will initially issue a Verification Authority Letter based on the system used during the technician’s performance exam. The FAA may later expand that authority to cover *identical or lesser configurations* of that type/make/model system. To request this “expansion of verification authority” the system’s sponsor will need to contact their FAA Inspector.

## **Documentation Required to Obtain Verification Authority:**

- **A Course Completion Certificate.**
  - Technicians must complete an FAA-Approved Training Course and provide a Course Completion Certificate proving that they successfully completed an FAA-approved training course for the type/make/model system.
  - There may be times when a training course is no longer available. In such case, the FAA may administer a bypass exam (if available and permissible).
- **A Completed Performance Exam with a Passing Grade.**

- Technicians must take a hands-on performance exam administered by an FAA employee.
- This is required for each type/make/model system for which a technician seeks verification authority.
  
- **An FCC General Radio-Telephone Operator’s License (GROL).** Technician’s must have this before performing any work on non-federal systems that have a radio transmitter. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issues the GROL. The license applies to all non-federal systems with transmitters and is valid for the holder's lifetime. For further details, please contact the FCC.
  
- **A Sponsor Request Letter.** Have the Sponsor submit a Request for Verification Authority to their FAA Inspector. A District Office Training Specialist will review the technician’s qualifications. If all qualifications have been met the FAA will issue verification authority on the type/make/model system specified in the request. (Further details are below.)

**Scope of a Technician’s Verification Authority:**

- **Verification Authority is Specific to the System Type/Make/Model – Not the Site Location.** The FAA grants technicians the authority to maintain only the type/make/model system identified in their Verification Authority Letter. That letter, along with previously submitted proof of qualifications, serves as the basis for the FAA to expand the technician’s authority to other sites with *identical or lesser configurations* of that same type/make/model system. (Note: Expansion requires FAA approval.)
  
- An existing Verification Authority Letter is not sufficient for more complex configurations and/or other type/make/model systems. The technician must provide proof of qualifications before the FAA will issue a new Verification Authority Letter. (See “Documentation Needed to Obtain Verification Authority,” above.)

## FAQ

- 1. May non-federal technicians substitute on-site exams for an *existing* training course? E.g., could the technician take an FAA-administered on-site bypass exam, and a performance exam, instead of an off-site training course?**

No. If an FAA-approved course exists the non-federal technician must take it.

- 2. Are there FAA-approved “bypass exams” available for all non-federal systems?**

No. The FAA’s non-federal AWOS advisory circular prohibits the use of bypass exams for AWOS. The FAA Academy may have bypass exams for certain, older model NavAids. [Your Non-Federal Program Liaison](#) can provide more information.

- 3. Are there apprenticeship programs for any non-federal systems? No.**

- 4. Must sponsors hire a manufacturer/vendor’s technician to maintain their system?**

No. It may be possible to hire a third-party technician. (I.e., a person who is eligible to receive verification authority, but is not employed by the manufacturer/vendor.)

- 5. Does the FAA offer AWOS training courses?**

No. The FAA does not have training courses for non-federal AWOS.

Note: Some manufacturers and vendors provide training, but it might only be available to their employees.