

NOTICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

N 8900.602

National Policy

Effective Date:
10/4/21

Cancellation Date:
10/4/22

SUBJ: Part 121 Aircraft Dispatcher Operating Familiarization

1. Purpose of This Notice. This notice requires Principal Operations Inspectors (POI) and Aviation Safety Inspectors—Aircraft Dispatch (ASI-AD) to conduct a focused review of Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 121 aircraft dispatcher qualification programs. The objective of this review is to identify and correct part 121 aircraft dispatcher qualification programs that allow an eligibility period for the completion of aircraft dispatcher operating familiarization. This notice also announces revised policy in all sections of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Order 8900.1, Volume 3, Chapter 22, Aircraft Dispatcher Training and Qualification Programs.

2. Audience. The primary audience for this notice is POIs and ASI-ADs in the Flight Standards Safety Assurance offices responsible for the oversight of aircraft dispatcher qualification programs at air carriers that conduct domestic or flag operations. The secondary audience includes the Safety Standards and Foundational Business offices.

3. Where You Can Find This Notice. You can find this notice on the MyFAA employee website at https://employees.faa.gov/tools_resources/orders_notices, the Flight Standards Information Management System (FSIMS) at <https://fsims.avs.faa.gov>, and the Dynamic Regulatory System (DRS) at <https://drs.faa.gov>. Operators and the public can find this notice on the FAA's website at https://www.faa.gov/regulations_policies/orders_notices, FSIMS at <https://fsims.faa.gov>, and the DRS.

4. Background.

a. Operating Familiarization. Part 121, § 121.463(c) requires aircraft dispatchers serving in domestic or flag operations to complete operating familiarization within the preceding 12 calendar-months.

b. Section 121.401(b). Section 121.401(b) states, in pertinent part, that whenever an aircraft dispatcher completes recurrent training in the calendar-month before or after the calendar-month in which the training was required, the dispatcher is considered to have completed it in the calendar-month in which it was required. Order 8900.1, Volume 3, Chapter 22, Section 1, Scope, Concept, and Definitions, refers to this 3-calendar-month period as the “eligibility period.” Generally, the calendar-month before the due month is referred to as “grace month early” and the calendar-month after the due month is referred to as “grace month late.”

c. Final Rule. In March 1972, the FAA issued the Certification and Operations: Domestic, Flag, and Supplemental Air Carriers and Commercial Operators of Large Aircraft Final Rule (37 FR 5606), which established the requirement for operating familiarization to be completed every 12 calendar-months. The preamble stated that the Final Rule “makes operating familiarization a recurrent training requirement” (37 FR 5607). As a result, the eligibility period and use of grace months has been applied to the operating familiarization requirement, but not consistently.

d. Recent Review. The Air Transportation Division (AFS-200) recently conducted a review of the pertinent regulations to determine whether the provisions of § 121.401(b) apply to aircraft dispatcher operating familiarization. Sections 121.427 and 121.433 specify the aircraft dispatcher recurrent training requirements. Neither §§ 121.427 nor 121.433 include operating familiarization as a recurrent training requirement. Operating familiarization is a qualification requirement specified in part 121 Subpart P, Aircraft Dispatcher Qualifications and Duty Time. Although the Final Rule preamble suggests operating familiarization is a recurrent training requirement, the pertinent regulations are clear that operating familiarization is not part of recurrent training. Therefore, the provisions of § 121.401(b) do not apply to operating familiarization.

5. Action. Within 60 days of issuance of this notice, POIs and ASI-ADs responsible for the surveillance of air carriers that conduct domestic or flag operations must conduct a focused review of the aircraft dispatcher qualification programs for their assigned certificate holder (CH) using the National/Divisional Custom Data Collection Tool (C DCT) “Part 121 Dispatcher Operating Familiarization” to identify if the CH allows an eligibility period or grace months for aircraft dispatcher operating familiarization.

a. CH Allows an Eligibility Period or Grace Months. If the CH allows an eligibility period or grace months for aircraft dispatcher operating familiarization, the POI must notify the CH that it must revise its aircraft dispatcher qualification program. The notification should reference this notice and explain that the provisions of § 121.401(b) do not apply to aircraft dispatcher operating familiarization. The notification should allow the CH 12 calendar-months from notification to revise its aircraft dispatcher qualification program.

b. CH Does Not Allow an Eligibility Period or Grace Months. If the CH does not allow an eligibility period or grace months for aircraft dispatcher operating familiarization, no further action is required.

c. Create a C DCT. POIs will create an assessment on the Comprehensive Assessment Plan (CAP) for each assigned CH described above to determine compliance with the requirements outlined in this notice. To create a principal inspector (PI) C DCT, follow these steps (Refer to Q Card Q3-10 “Custom DCT – Using a National/Divisional Template” – Method 2):

- (1) From the CAP, select the “Add Assessment” button.
- (2) Select “CH/A” from the drop-down menu.
- (3) Select the “Custom DCT” radio button.

(4) In the text box, enter “Part 121 Aircraft Dispatcher Operating Familiarization.” This will activate the “Add” button. Any text entered here will be overwritten once you select the National/Divisional template in Step 12, which autofills the “Custom DCT Name” field with the template title.

(5) Select “Add.”

(6) Enter “N8900.602” (without quotes) in the “Local/Divisional/National” field.

(7) Select the checkbox for “L/D/N Locked?”

(8) For “Requires Own Assessment?” select “Yes” from the drop-down menu.

(9) Select the “Performance” radio button next to “Question Type.”

(10) Ensure the “OP” radio button next to “Specialty” is selected.

(11) Select the “Yes” radio button from the “Apply from Templates” menu, and then select “National/Divisional” from the drop-down menu.

(12) Select “Part 121 Aircraft Dispatcher Operating Familiarization” from the “Select Template” drop-down menu.

(13) Select “Search.”

(14) After the question populates, select the “Add” button.

(15) Scroll up to the “Custom DCT Context” panel and verify that the “Custom DCT Name” field has prepopulated with the template title and replaced the text entered previously in Step 4.

(16) Scroll down and select “OK.” The “Assessment Details” window will appear.

(17) Recommend resource and populate other fields on the Assessment Details screen, as applicable.

(18) Select a calendar-year quarter from the “Assessment Due Date” drop-down menu that accommodates the required completion date of this notice.

(19) Click “Save” to save the Assessment Details.

(20) Verify that the C DCT(s) appears in the CAP.

(21) Select “Submit Plan.”

d. Record Results. Once resourced, the assigned ASI performs data collection and recording using the “Aircraft Dispatcher Operating Familiarization” National/Divisional C DCT. Followup actions are recorded in the Action Item Tracking Tool (AITT).

6. Related Order 8900.1 Sections. AFS-200 has revised Order 8900.1, Volume 3, Chapter 22 in its entirety. Information regarding operating familiarization is available in Sections 1 and 6.

7. Disposition. We will incorporate the information in this notice into Order 8900.1 before this notice expires. Direct questions or comments concerning this notice to the Air Transportation Division (AFS-200) at 202-267-8166.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Carty", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert C. Carty
Acting Executive Director, Flight Standards Service