

NOTICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

N 8900.646

National Policy

Effective Date:
12/12/22

Cancellation Date:
12/12/23

SUBJ: Specialty Aircraft Examiners Conducting Practical Tests in Experimental Aircraft

- 1. Purpose of This Notice.** This notice announces clarification to guidance in Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Order 8900.1, Volume 5, Chapter 9, Section 2, Airman Qualification Requirements for Aircraft for Which the Operating Limitations Require an FAA-Issued Authorization to Act as Pilot in Command.
- 2. Audience.** The primary audience for this notice is Flight Standards (FS) aviation safety inspectors (ASI) and Specialty Aircraft Examiners (SAE), who conduct practical tests in experimental aircraft. The secondary audience includes personnel working in the Regulatory Support Division (AFS-600) and the Civil Aviation Registry Division (AFB-700), and FS divisions and branches.
- 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 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 and DRS.
- 4. Reissue.** This notice reissues Notice N 8900.597, Specialty Aircraft Examiners Conducting Practical Tests in Experimental Aircraft, dated September 14, 2021.
- 5. Background.** The FAA discovered that, in certain circumstances, type ratings were being issued incorrectly. A review of airman certification applications revealed that, in some cases, examiners were conducting type rating practical tests in experimental aircraft and issuing the equivalent type rating to the applicant. An experimental aircraft may not be configured, equipped, or maintained to comply with any type certificate. Even though an aircraft may appear similar to a type-certificated version, there is ultimately no assurance that it functions or performs like the type-certificated version. A designated examiner does not hold the authority to make an airworthiness determination as to whether an aircraft is "similar enough." The Aircraft Certification Service (AIR) is responsible for making that determination.

6. Guidance. Order 8900.1, Volume 5, Chapter 9, Section 2, paragraph 5-1585 will be modified to reflect the following:

“5-1585 EXPERIMENTAL AIRCRAFT OF SAME MAKE AND MODEL AS TYPE DESIGNATED AIRCRAFT. Some makes and models of surplus military aircraft were originally type certificated in the limited or restricted category after World War II. All of these aircraft received Type Certificate Data Sheets (TCDS) and, for those aircraft with a maximum gross takeoff weight (MGTOW) greater than 12,500 pounds, a “Type Designation” requiring the PIC to hold an appropriate type rating since they are large aircraft. Subsequently, some of these aircraft have been issued a Special Airworthiness Certificate for an experimental purpose in accordance with FAA Order 8130.2, as amended. For operation of these experimental aircraft, an airman can elect to satisfactorily complete either one of the following procedures to serve as PIC of the aircraft.

A. Aircraft Type Rating Practical Test. The applicant may complete the appropriate aircraft type rating practical test in that type-certificated aircraft, in accordance with Volume 5, Chapter 2, Section 19. Aircraft with a Special Airworthiness Certificate issued for an experimental purpose shall not be used for type rating practical tests. Upon successful completion of the required tasks, the type rating will be placed on the airman’s certificate. The airman may then serve as PIC of aircraft of that make and model, regardless of the issued airworthiness certificate.

B. Training and Practical Test/Evaluation. The applicant may complete the training required by this section [Volume 5, Chapter 9, Section 2], and satisfactorily complete the evaluation for the issuance of an experimental aircraft authorization on the airman’s certificate. The airman can only serve as PIC of that make and model aircraft holding a Special Airworthiness Certificate issued for an experimental purpose.”

7. Action. Effective immediately, inspectors and examiners should discontinue conducting type rating practical tests in experimental aircraft. Aircraft with a Special Airworthiness Certificate issued for an experimental purpose shall not be used for type rating practical tests.

8. Disposition. We will incorporate the information in this notice into Order 8900.1 before this notice expires. Direct questions or comments concerning the information in this notice to the General Aviation and Commercial Division (AFS-800), Training and Certification Group (AFS-810) at 9-AFS-800-Correspondence@faa.gov.



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