

# NOTICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

N 8900.691

National Policy

Effective Date:  
3/27/24

Cancellation Date:  
3/27/25

**SUBJ:** Airman Certification Standards and Practical Test Standards for Airmen;  
Incorporation by Reference

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**1. Purpose of This Notice.** This is a special-emphasis notice. This notice provides policy and guidance to Operations aviation safety inspectors (ASI) and evaluators concerning regulations that govern airman certification knowledge and practical testing. The intent of this notice is to clarify the applicable testing standards during the transition period between the publication date and effective date for the Airman Certification Standards and Practical Test Standards for Airmen; Incorporation by Reference final rule. In addition, this notice will clarify how to identify the deficient areas of a knowledge test based on practical test standards (PTS) testing codes and apply them to the new Airman Certification Standards (ACS) when planning for the upcoming practical test. This notice contains guidance that is pertinent to Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 61, § 61.43(a)(1).

**2. Audience.** The primary audience for this notice is personnel conducting airman certification practical tests and Flight Standards (FS) Safety Assurance ASIs (Operations) with oversight responsibilities for designees, 14 CFR part 141 pilot schools, and 14 CFR part 142 training centers. The secondary audience includes the Safety Standards 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](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 Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) website at [https://www.faa.gov/regulations\\_policies/orders\\_notices](https://www.faa.gov/regulations_policies/orders_notices) and DRS.

**4. Background.** The Airman Certification Standards and Practical Test Standards for Airmen; Incorporation by Reference final rule revises certain regulations governing airman certification testing standards. Currently, the FAA ACS and PTS are utilized as the testing standards for practical tests and proficiency checks for persons seeking or holding an airman certificate or rating. However, these standards were not appropriately integrated into the regulations; rather, they are indirectly referenced in part 61. The FAA did not provide the regulated community with the notice or opportunity to comment required by the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) before the community was required to comply with the standards set forth in the ACS/PTS. As a result, the FAA incorporated these ACS and PTS by reference into the certification requirements for pilots and flight instructors through proper notice and comment procedures required by the APA.

**5. Guidance.** The implementation period of the rule is meant to provide minimal disruption to the pilot training and certification industry. The following paragraphs describe how to transition from a superseded testing document (published prior to the final rule) to the current testing document (published with the final rule) during the implementation period.

**a. Final Rule Provisions.**

(1) The final rule provides for an implementation period after publication before the testing documents listed in § 61.14 become effective. This period allows for transitioning from a superseded testing document to the current testing document.

(2) The final rule, along with all ACS and PTS documents listed in § 61.14, goes into effect 60 days after publication of the final rule. All practical tests and proficiency checks that begin on or after that date are required to utilize the current ACS and PTS documents listed in § 61.14. Part 61 appendix A identifies which ACS/PTS must be used for a specific practical test or proficiency check.

**b. Practical Tests.**

(1) Practical Tests Initiated Before the Effective Date of the Rule.

(a) Applicable Testing Documents. Applicants that begin a practical test on or after the publication date but before the effective date may use either the superseded testing document or the current testing document listed in § 61.14. Evaluators and applicants should discuss this when scheduling the practical test, so that the plan of action is created based on the agreed-upon testing document. If either party does not agree on which testing document is to be used, then the superseded ACS/PTS will be used until the current ACS/PTS becomes effective.

**Note:** This notice does not apply to incremented practical tests. These tests are planned events; therefore, applicants and evaluators need to take into account the effective date of the rule.

(b) Endorsements. During the implementation period, the applicant will need to satisfy the ground and flight training for the Areas of Operation (AOO) and Tasks identified in the ACS/PTS used for the practical test. In addition, the applicant must meet the prerequisites for a practical test including any endorsement(s), if required by part 61, as described in § 61.39(a)(6) to reflect the requirements of the applicable ACS/PTS.

(c) Effect of Discontinuance of the Practical Test. An applicant who has received a Letter of Discontinuance or Notice of Disapproval (FAA Form 8060-5), as authorized by § 61.43(e), prior to the effective date of the final rule, may continue with the superseded ACS/PTS testing document used at the time of the initial practical test. The applicant is entitled credit for those areas of operation that were passed, but only if the applicant meets the requirements of § 61.43(f) within the 60-day period after the date the practical test was discontinued. If the 60-day period lapses, the applicant can no longer credit the AOs previously passed and must retake the entire practical test utilizing the ACS/PTS listed in § 61.14.

(d) Documentation. When issuing a Letter of Discontinuance or Notice of Disapproval during the implementation period (i.e., the date between publication of the final rule and the effective date of the final rule) and up to 59 days after the effective date, the evaluator should denote the document number, publication month/year, and the latest change number, if applicable, of the ACS/PTS used (e.g., FAA-S-8081-16B, date February 2013), so that if the practical test is completed within the 60-day timeframe permitted in § 61.43(f)(1), the evaluator and applicant are prepared accordingly.

**Note:** At 59 days after the effective date of the rule, the superseded testing documents will be removed from the FAA website and may be no longer used.<sup>1</sup>

(2) Practical Tests Initiated On or After the Effective Date of the Rule.

(a) Applicable Testing Documents. Applicants that start a practical test on or after the effective date of the rule must use the ACS/PTS listed in § 61.14. The only exception to this is a practical test that was started prior to the effective date and resulted in a discontinuance.

**Note:** See subparagraph 5b(1)(c) above for discontinued practical tests initiated before the effective date of the final rule.

(b) Endorsements. The applicant will need to satisfy the ground and flight training for the AOOs and Tasks identified in the ACS/PTS listed in § 61.14 for the practical test. In addition, the applicant must meet the prerequisites for a practical test including any endorsement(s), if required by part 61, as described in § 61.39(a)(6) to reflect the requirements of the applicable ACS/PTS listed in § 61.14.

**c. PTS/ACS Knowledge Test Codes.**

(1) The evaluator should review the applicant's knowledge test when creating the plan of action for the practical test. Knowledge tests that correspond to an ACS have codes that match directly to the Task element for a given AOO and Task in that ACS. This makes it easy for the evaluator to target some of the questions to the knowledge areas that were found deficient on the knowledge test to ensure the applicant has the requisite knowledge. Applicants and evaluators should interpret these codes using the ACS revision in effect on the date of the knowledge test.

(2) For knowledge tests taken before an ACS replaces a PTS, the test results will list Learning Statement Codes (LSC) that link to references and broad subject areas. To help the evaluator identify these codes, the FAA produced a document called the Learning Statement Reference Guide for Airman Knowledge Testing, which is located on the Airman Testing web page at [https://www.faa.gov/training\\_testing/testing](https://www.faa.gov/training_testing/testing). The evaluator should use this guide to determine the unsatisfactory subject areas, find the same or similar subject area in the Task

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<sup>1</sup> As the last date upon which someone could initiate a practical test using the superseded ACS or PTS is the day before the effective date of the final rule, the 59-day period will permit a person to complete a discontinued practical test using the standard under which the practical test was initiated within the 60-day window permitted by regulation.

elements of the ACS, and incorporate the subject areas into the plan of action for the practical test to ensure the deficiency found on the knowledge test has been corrected.

**6. Action.** Inspectors and examiners shall refer to this notice when conducting practical tests during the implementation period for the final rule.

**7. Disposition.** We will not incorporate the information in this notice into FAA 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), by email at [9-AVS-ACSPTSInquiries@faa.gov](mailto:9-AVS-ACSPTSInquiries@faa.gov), or by phone at 202-267-1100.



Hugh Thomas for  
Lawrence Fields  
Executive Director, Flight Standards Service