

NOTICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

N 8900.746

National Policy

Effective Date:
7/28/25

Cancellation Date:
7/28/26

SUBJ: Certification of Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) Part 135 Single-Pilot Operators

1. Purpose of This Notice. This notice supplements current policy relating to the initial certification process for a Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 135 single-pilot applicant.

2. Audience. The primary audience for this notice is aviation safety inspectors (ASI) and principal inspectors (PI) conducting initial certifications of 14 CFR part 135 single-pilot operators. The secondary audience includes Front Line Managers (FLM), office managers, and division managers involved in the initial certification of 14 CFR part 135 single-pilot operators.

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 Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) website at https://www.faa.gov/regulations_policies/orders_notices and DRS.

4. Background.

a. The FAA is working to reduce overall wait times for initial certification applicants whose proposed operations are of limited scope and complexity and are not required by regulation to:

- Prepare and keep current a manual setting forth the certificate holder's (CH) procedures and policies (14 CFR § 135.21(a)); and/or
- Establish and maintain an approved pilot training program (14 CFR § 135.341(a)).

b. The FAA has determined, for 14 CFR part 135 initial certification applicants proposing to conduct operations as a single-pilot operator as authorized by Operations Specification (OpSpec) A040, Single Pilot Operator, that the Safety Assurance System (SAS) Element Design (ED) documentation requirements can be reduced without negatively impacting safety. This will align the level of documentation required by SAS during the Design Assessment (DA) phase of initial certification projects with the level of documentation required by the regulations. The FAA believes that reducing the documentation during the DA phase and placing additional focus during the Performance Assessment (PA) phase is more effective to ensure repeatable safety performance for single-pilot operators.

5. Discussion. Each of the subparagraphs below describes scenarios that address the stages of certification that certification project managers (CPM) may be in when this notice is published.

a. New 14 CFR Part 135 Single-Pilot Projects (SAS Peer Group D)—DA Phase. This applies to applicants seeking a 14 CFR part 135 certificate for single-pilot operations identified by the proposed issuance of OpSpec A040. Effective upon issuance of this notice, when CPMs for Peer Group D applicants generate their Comprehensive Assessment Plan (CAP) during the initial certification process, SAS will auto-populate two new Element Design Assessments (EDA), one for Airworthiness ASIs and the other for Operations ASIs. Each EDA will contain one question for the ASIs to document that the information contained in the applicant's compliance statement and other required documents submitted in their formal application meet all regulatory requirements of the applicable sections of 14 CFR.

b. New 14 CFR Part 135 Single-Pilot Projects (SAS Peer Group D)—PA Phase. During the PA phase, CPMs should conduct a robust assessment of the applicant's performance through demonstration and inspection. In addition to required activities, such as the competency check required by 14 CFR § 135.293, CPMs are encouraged to evaluate the applicant's systems through multiple simulated or actual real-world scenarios. This may require multiple days to fully assess the applicant's system and ensure repeatable safety performance. The CPM can reallocate the time savings realized during the ED phase of certification for this robust PA phase.

c. Title 14 CFR Part 135 Single-Pilot Projects Already in Progress. CPMs for 14 CFR part 135 single-pilot projects whose certifications are already in progress have two options:

(1) For certifications in progress, where the CPM has not yet generated a CAP, SAS will generate the two EDAs described above in subparagraph 6a when the CAP is generated.

(2) Certifications in progress that have generated a CAP will see the new EDAs added to their CAP automatically. CPMs may choose to take one of the three following actions:

(a) Continue with the original EDAs and disregard the new EDAs. When setting the certificate to active after the certification project, the CPM must select the button in SAS labeled "Approve Certification with Incomplete Assessments."

(b) Disregard the original EDAs and only complete the two new EDAs. When setting the certificate to active after the certification project, the CPM must select the button in SAS labeled "Approve Certification with Incomplete Assessments."

(c) Complete all original EDAs and the new EDAs. In this case, the CPM will not need to select the "Approve Certification with Incomplete Assessments" button.

d. All 14 CFR Part 135 Single-Pilot Operators—Continued Operational Safety (COS). Once the certificate has been issued, the responsible Flight Standards office will continue to use SAS and system safety principles to validate and document ongoing oversight of 14 CFR part 135 single-pilot operators. Post-certification, PIs will continue to adjust the Certificate Holder Assessment Tool (CHAT) and CAP to reflect the operator's current state and risk factors. Since the changes outlined in this notice remove standard DAs of single-pilot operators, PIs may choose to create a Custom Data Collection Tool (C DCT) to conduct DAs (e.g., for certain

configuration changes). PIs should use existing SAS processes to create the C DCT and load questions appropriate to the process or authorization being evaluated. When searching for questions to add to the C DCT, PIs must click the “Include Unscoped Questions” button.

6. Action. Safety Assurance (SA) personnel conducting 14 CFR part 135 single-pilot applicant initial certifications must review this notice. They should also consider attending future formal outreach events that will focus on this revised guidance, which will be announced in the Employee Advisory and other broadcast publications. Assistance regarding the intent of this notice is available by contacting the Air Transportation Division (AFS-200) using the information below. Questions regarding SAS automation should be directed to the SA Office Liaisons or submitted via a feedback form within SAS.

7. Disposition. We will 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 Operations Group (AFS-220), 135 Flight Operations Section, at 202-267-8166 or 9-AFS-200-Correspondence@faa.gov.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Reckert', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Robert Reckert for
Lawrence Fields
Executive Director, Flight Standards Service

Appendix A. Questions About Revised Guidance for Certifying 14 CFR Part 135 Single-Pilot Operators

Question 1: What will this look like in the Safety Assurance System (SAS)?

Answer 1: The Element Design Assessments (EDA) populated when the certification project manager (CPM) generates their Comprehensive Assessment Plan (CAP) during initial certification will each contain the question shown below:

Do the applicant's compliance statement and associated documents exist in enough detail to meet the regulatory requirements and produce the intended results for the proposed operation?

Regulations/Guidance: SRR § 119.35

FAA Order 8900.1, Volume 2, Chapter 4, Section 1

FAA Order 8900.1, Volume 2, Chapter 4, Section 3

FAA Order 8900.1, Volume 2, Chapter 4, Section 6

AC 120-49

Question 2: How should I complete the Design/Manual Reference field?

Answer 2: List all documents, including the compliance statement, provided by the applicant and evaluated by the aviation safety inspector(s) (ASI) completing the question.

Question 3: What if the applicant/operator chooses to have a manual, such as a training program? Do I need to do anything differently?

Answer 3a: For 14 CFR part 135 single-pilot applicants who choose to submit a manual for acceptance or approval, CPMs may create a Custom Data Collection Tool (C DCT) to evaluate the manual. CPMs should use existing SAS processes to create the C DCT and load questions appropriate to the manual(s) being evaluated. When searching for questions to add to the C DCT, CPMs must click the "Include Unscoped Questions" button.

Answer 3b: If an existing 14 CFR part 135 single-pilot operator chooses to submit a manual for acceptance or approval, principal inspectors (PI) may choose to create a C DCT to evaluate the manual. PIs should use existing SAS processes to create the C DCT and load questions appropriate to the manual(s) being evaluated. When searching for questions to add to the C DCT, PIs must click the "Include Unscoped Questions" button.

Figure A-1. Including Unscoped Questions in a Custom Data Collection Tool (C DCT)

The screenshot displays the 'Create/Modify Custom DCT' window. The 'Custom DCT Context' section contains the following fields:

- * CHI/A Name / Designator:** *B7A - Demo for FAA New Part: 135D (Pre-Cert)
- Peer Group:** (empty text field)
- Local / Divisional / National:** (empty text field)
- L/D/N Locked?:** ☐
- Specialty:** ☒ AW ☐ OP
- Include Unscoped Questions:** ☒ (highlighted by a blue arrow)
- * Custom DCT Name:** Demo 3 - SS
- * Requires Own Assessment?:** Yes
- Question Type:** ☐ Performance ☒ Design

The 'Search/Add Question(S)' section includes:

- Apply from Templates:** ☒ No ☐ Yes
- * Master List of Functions:** ALL (dropdown menu)
- Add Reference** (button)
- Keyword(s):** (empty text field)