

June 2026 Edition

The Airman Testing Community Advisory (ATCA) is produced by the General Aviation and Commercial Division, Training and Certification Group, Testing Standards Section (TSS), the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) office responsible for practical test and airman certification standards, certification testing programs, and supporting reference materials. This advisory provides an additional channel for change management communications to our stakeholders and supports the correlation of training and testing for an effective certification process.

Stakeholder Communications

You are encouraged to submit questions and comments about our products and services by emailing us at TestingStandardsComments@faa.gov. This email address replaces the previous afs630comments@faa.gov address.

Please continue to email comments related to Practical Test Standards (PTS) and Airman Certification Standards (ACS) to acsptsinquiries@faa.gov.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

The latest version of the Testing Standards Section Frequently Asked Questions document is available at this link: [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Standards

Sport Pilot Practical Test Standards (PTS)

FAA-S-8081-29A, Sport Pilot and Flight Instructors with a Sport Pilot Rating PTS for Airplane Category, Rotorcraft Category Gyroplane, and Glider Category; FAA-S-8081-30A, Sport Pilot and Flight Instructors with a Sport Pilot Rating PTS for Lighter-Than-Air Category; and FAA-S-8081-31A, Sport Pilot and Flight Instructors with a Sport Pilot Rating PTS for Powered Parachute Category and Weight-Shift-Control Aircraft Category are being revised to harmonize with the Modernization of Special Airworthiness Certificate (MOSAIC) and will be posted to our website as soon as possible after October 22, 2025.

It is expected that evaluators, instructors, and applicants comply with changes to Title 14 CFR chapter 1, subchapter D, part 61, effective October 22, 2025, regardless of the PTS version used for sport pilots and flight instructors with a sport pilot rating.

Evaluators, instructors, and applicants may continue to use FAA-S-8081-29A, FAA-S-8081-30A, and FAA-S-8081-31A until the updated versions, FAA-S-8081-29B, FAA-S-8081-30B, and FAA-S-8081-31B, become effective. However, they must replace any outdated standards and information in the "A" versions with the most current standards and information from the new rule, which takes effect on October 22, 2025.

Reference Materials

The TSS continually evaluates our internal processes for developing, revising, and maintaining reference materials to ensure programmatic efficiency and greater agility in keeping pace with advancements in aviation safety and technology.

FAA-H-8083-4, Helicopter Instructor’s Handbook

The FAA determined that FAA-H-8083-4, Helicopter Instructor’s Handbook, published in 2012, is no longer necessary. Its content is entirely redundant because the same concepts are already covered in FAA-H-8083-21B, the Helicopter Flying Handbook, published in 2019. FAA-H-8083-21B is the primary source for certified flight instructors (CFI) and students to teach and learn helicopter ground and flight concepts.

Three Airman Knowledge Test Questions (AKTQ) currently reference FAA-H-8083-4. One question was revised and assigned a different reference, and two questions were unchanged, with the FAA-H-8083-4 reference replaced by another valid reference. These changes took effect on April 27, 2026, as part of the quarterly cycle update.

Aviation Maintenance Technician (AMT)

Airman Certification Oral and Practical Project

The Testing Standards Section and the Airman Certification Standards Exam Board (AEB) have already implemented, or are actively implementing, several improvements that directly support the goals of reducing administrative burden, improving consistency, minimizing human error, and better aligning the testing process with real-world maintenance practices.

The practical test bank updates specifically address many of the workflow, usability, and standardization concerns identified by stakeholders and Designated Mechanic Examiners (DME).

- Revising practical questions to align directly with assigned projects, Aircraft Maintenance Manuals (AMM), and Advisory Circulars (AC) improves consistency among applicants and reduces reliance on subjective “look up and explain” questioning. This creates a more streamlined, practical testing experience that better supports examiner workflow and applicant understanding, more closely reflecting real-world maintenance environments and industry practices.
- The increased discretion provided to DMEs when determining acceptable answers using project details, manufacturer information, and approved reference materials supports more efficient and realistic applicant evaluation while improving testing flexibility within standardized guidance.
- Encouraging DMEs to review the revised questions during pretest planning directly supports smoother transitions in the testing process and improves familiarity with system updates before applicant testing begins.
- The solicitation for DME submitted practical projects and related questions has demonstrated a continued commitment to improving integration with real-world examiner workflows, has received positive engagement, and has strengthened alignment between testing systems and current industry maintenance practices.

Collectively, these actions mark meaningful progress toward the broader goals identified by DMEs, including reducing administrative inefficiencies, minimizing opportunities for human-factor errors, improving examiner usability, and creating a more integrated and practical airman certification process. For questions or to express interest in participating in project submissions, contact 9-AVS-Mechanic-Test-Generator@faa.gov.

Practical Test Banks Updates

- Practical Test Banks
 - Aviation Mechanic General (AMG) - Changes activated April 20, 2026.
 - Aviation Mechanic Airframe (AMA) - Scheduled for activation July 19, 2026.
 - Aviation Mechanic Powerplant (AMP) - Review in progress.
- Aviation Mechanic General (AMG)
 - **Guidance Update:** AM.I.L.S1 – Malfunction or Defect Report
 - For project AM.I.L.S1, the intent is to evaluate the applicant’s ability to accurately complete Form 8010-4, Malfunction or Defect Report. Although the preferred method of submission is through the electronic Service Difficulty Reporting (SDR) System site, the online system should not be used for this project unless tied to an actual discrepancy. Instead, DMEs should have applicants complete a fillable PDF or a printed copy of Form FAA 8010-4. Guidance on properly completing Form 8010-4 is available in the SDRS Field Instructions (pages 7-11) and AC 20-109B, Service Difficulty Reporting System (Air Operator/Air Agency/General Aviation/Unmanned Aircraft Systems).

Minimum Tools and Equipment List (MTEL) Updates

When revisions to the MTEL require DMEs to obtain new or additional tools, equipment, or materials, prior notification will be issued to Designees via this advisory and the Designee Management System (DMS). The current MTEL is available in FAA Order 8900.1, Volume 5, Chapter 5, Section 11. DMEs may submit MTEL feedback to 9-AWA-AFS-300-Correspondence@faa.gov.

DMEs should obtain the following additional tools, equipment, or materials to comply with the upcoming MTEL revisions. Each item lists a target date for inclusion in the MTEL.

- Liquid Penetrant Kit to conduct non-destructive testing (June 1, 2026): AM.I.K.S5, Perform a dye penetrant inspection.

Airman Knowledge Testing

Airman knowledge tests play a crucial role in the certification process for airmen, ensuring they possess the knowledge required to operate safely within the National Airspace System (NAS).

To uphold the integrity and quality of these knowledge tests, a rigorous review of the questions is essential. Two primary approaches are used to review test questions:

1. **Analyzing Performance Statistics:** FAA Subject Matter Experts (SME) collaborate closely with the test development team at PSI Services, LLC, the vendor for the FAA's Airman Certificate Testing Service (ACTS) Contract, to evaluate each question's performance. Questions that do not meet established performance benchmarks are flagged for internal review, ensuring they remain equitable and challenging for all test takers.
2. **Examining Candidate Comments:** While taking a knowledge test, candidates can provide feedback on questions they believe may have issues. This feedback provides firsthand insights and is routinely reviewed by FAA SMEs to determine whether modifications are warranted.

When a question is selected for review, it undergoes a comprehensive analysis. This includes checking for spelling and grammatical accuracy, clarity, consistent terminology, structural integrity, and proper formatting. The review also ensures alignment with FAA regulations, testing and airman certification standards, and FAA reference materials.

The FAA is committed to keeping the public informed about significant updates to knowledge testing. While the specifics of active test questions remain confidential, the FAA will continue to provide knowledge test updates through this advisory. These updates will include information on new test developments, changes to or removal of test content, terminology updates, and advances in test modernization.

PSI's Test Taker Portal Transition

PSI is transitioning its certification exams to PSI's Test Taker Portal. This modernization centers on an "airman applicants first" approach, with enhanced technology, streamlined digital processes, improved reliability, and a fully paperless experience. FAA exam content, standards, oversight, and security remain unchanged.

Additional details, including support resources and updates on the Fall 2026 implementation target, will be provided in future ATCA editions. In the meantime, you may contact PSI at faachangequestions@psionline.com for further information.

Aviation Maintenance Technician (AMT) Knowledge Tests

The FAA's ACTS contract requires PSI to assess FAA airman knowledge tests to ensure compliance with current standards for educational and psychological testing. In collaboration with the FAA and aviation industry partners, PSI has begun preliminary assessments of the AMT knowledge tests. This process does not change test question content, and all questions will continue to align with the applicable ACS codes and references. The AMT knowledge test assessment is expected to be completed later this year.

PSI has created a new resource page for applicants taking mechanic tests accessible at the following link [FAA Aircraft Mechanic Applicants \(AMT\) | PSI Exams](#).

Graphics Conversion Project Update

In partnership with PSI, the FAA is upgrading its airman knowledge testing system by embedding images directly in test questions, eliminating the need for printed test supplements. This initiative aims to provide candidates with a more integrated and modern testing experience. FAA SMEs review each test question with an embedded image to ensure accuracy. After implementation, PSI's test development team and FAA SMEs closely monitor the questions' performance to verify that they meet the intended standards.

Beginning October 27, 2026, the Instrument Rating Airplane (IRA) and Unmanned Aircraft General-Small (UAG) tests will include image-based questions not found in the test supplements (see examples below). This update enhances the tests by incorporating clearer, up-to-date images from the latest Sectional Charts, Instrument Approach Charts, and Low Altitude Enroute Charts. The images are sourced from the following FAA materials:

- [VFR Charts](#)
- [IFR Low Altitude Charts](#)

Once an image is embedded in a test question, it becomes an integral part of that question. Consequently, the specific images used in active test questions cannot be previewed, as doing so would compromise the exam's integrity.

Candidates preparing for FAA exams are encouraged to regularly visit the PSI True Talent site to access sample test questions and to become familiar with the new format.

The following exams feature questions with embedded images:

- Commercial Pilot
- Private Pilot
- Sport Pilot
- Unmanned Aircraft
- Instrument Rating
- Aviation Maintenance Technician (General, Airframe, and Powerplant)
- Parachute Rigger
- Flight Engineer

As the Graphics Conversion project progresses, we remain committed to transparency. We recognize that some test questions may require specific measuring tools. For those questions, applicants will receive the tools they need to respond accurately.

At this time, we cannot provide details about the design or operation of on-screen tools. However, any significant changes or new electronic tools introduced into the testing environment will be communicated well in advance via this bulletin. This will ensure candidates have ample time to become familiar with the tools.

The date for removing testing supplements from test centers has not yet been set. However, the public will receive ample notice before this change takes effect. Until the removal, candidates will continue to have access to the testing supplement for their exam.

Instrument Rating Airplane (IRA) Samples

Refer to the figure below to answer the question.

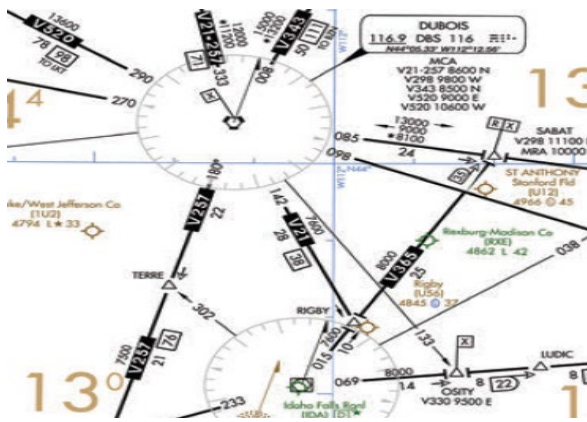


Image from Test Supplement

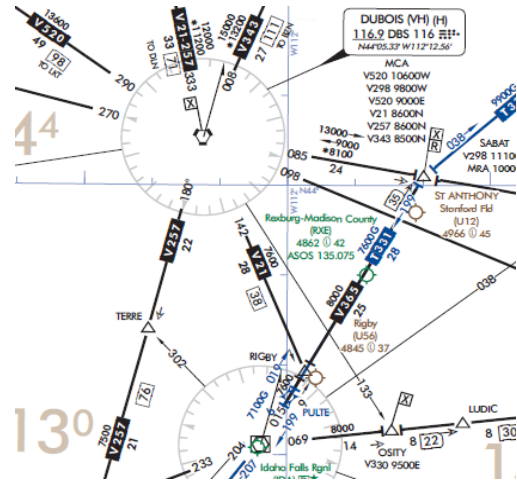
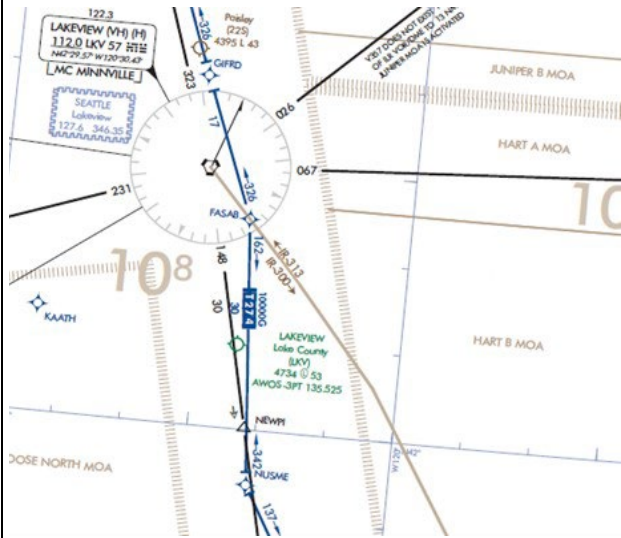


Image from Low Enroute Chart (L-11)

When flying a northbound IFR flight on V21, what is the minimum crossing altitude at DUBOIS (DBS) VORTAC?

- A. 7,500 feet.
- B. 8,600 feet. ✓
- C. 11,100 feet.

Refer to the image below to answer the question.



SOURCE: IFR Enroute Low Altitude-U.S. L-11; Dated 7 Aug 2025 to 2 Oct 2025

What is indicated by IR313/IR300 in the figure?

- A. An IFR Military Training Route. ✓
- B. A low altitude Victor airway.
- C. A WAAS enabled airway.

Unmanned Aircraft General – Small (UAG) Samples

Refer to the image below to answer the question.

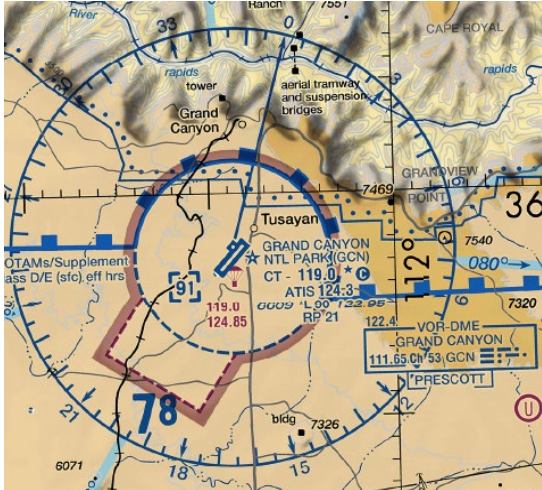


Sectional: Washington, dated 12 JUN 2025 to 7 AUG 2025

What type of airspace is associated with MILLVILLE MUNI (MIV) and is ATC authorization required to operate a small UA there?

- A. Class E that is associated with an airport surface area, authorization is required. ✓
- B. Class G that is associated with an operating control tower, authorization is required.
- C. Class B that is under the associated Class D airspace, authorization is not required.

Refer to the image below to answer the question.



Sectional: Las Vegas, dated 12 Jun 2025 to 7 Aug 2025

If GRAND CANYON NTL PARK (GCN) control tower is not in operation, which frequency should be used as a Common Traffic Advisory Frequency (CTAF) to monitor airport traffic?

- A. 119.0 ✓
- B. 124.3
- C. 122.95

Candidate Information Bulletins (CIB)

CIBs contain valuable information for test candidates, including details on examination registration and scheduling procedures, reporting to the examination site, test authorization and reauthorization requirements, and test content specifications.

Below are links to exams with available CIBs. This list will be updated as PSI and the FAA finalize evaluations of additional exams.

- [Airline Transport Pilot Multiengine \(ATM\)/Airline Transport Pilot Single Engine Airplane \(ATS\)](#)
- [Commercial Pilot Airplane \(CAX\)](#)
- [Commercial Pilot Helicopter \(CRH\)](#)
- [Instrument Rating Airplane \(IRA\)](#)
- [Instrument Rating Helicopter \(IRH\)](#)
- [Private Pilot Airplane \(PAR\)](#)
- [Private Pilot Helicopter](#)
- [Unmanned Aircraft General \(UAG\)](#)

Learning Statement Codes

The current version of the Learning Statement Reference Guide for Airman Knowledge Testing is available at the following link: [Learning Statement Codes](#).

ACS Codes

Of the **91** FAA airman knowledge tests offered, **33** now have ACS codes displayed on the corresponding Airman Knowledge Test Reports (AKTR). The light blue shading of the test code indicates these tests in the [FAA Airman Knowledge Testing Matrix](#).

Matrix

The latest version of the Airman Knowledge Testing Matrix is available at the following link: [FAA Airman Knowledge Testing Matrix](#).

Statistics

Airman Knowledge Tests Statistics

The CY 2025, Airman Knowledge Test Statistics, and Test Volume Chart are available at the following link: [Airman Knowledge Test Statistics](#).

Frequently Missed Knowledge Test ACS Codes

The Frequently Missed Knowledge Test ACS Codes Report is available at the following link: [Missed ACS Codes](#). It is based on Safety Performance and Analysis System (SPAS) data for the specified timeframe, includes ACS codes administered at least 100 times, and displays ACS codes missed on specific knowledge tests more than 70% of the time.