The Airman Testing Community Advisory (ATCA) is produced by the General Aviation and Commercial Division, Training and Certification Group, Testing Standards Section (TSS), which is the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) office responsible for practical test and airman certification standards, certification testing programs, and supporting reference materials. The intent of this advisory is to provide an additional method of change management communication to our stakeholders and support efforts to ensure training and testing remain correlated for an effective certification process.

Stakeholder Communications

We have an established process for timely responses to stakeholder inquiries and feedback. You are encouraged to submit questions and comments regarding our products and services to afs630comments@faa.gov.

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

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQS)

The latest version of the Testing Standards Section FAQs document is available at this link: Frequently Asked Questions.

Standards

Incorporation by Reference (IBR)

The Testing Standards Section publishes updates for the PTS and ACS through a rulemaking process called IBR.

The FAA introduced a new rule, *Airman Certification Standards and Practical Test Standards for Airmen; Incorporation by Reference,* to address airman testing standards. This rule codified 15 ACS and 18 PTS in Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations parts 61, 63, and 65 and aligns applicable knowledge and practical tests. The new rule was published in the Federal Register on April 1, 2024, and went into effect on **May 31, 2024**.

The ACS and PTS listed in the FAA's new rule have the full force and effect of the regulations. The ACS and PTS rule identifies a specific testing standard associated with each certificate, rating, or proficiency check, eliminating ambiguity about which standard must be used. The FAA also published FAA-G-ACS-2, *Airman Certification Standards Companion Guide for Pilots*, and associated documents, which are available online.

The final rule and associated documents can be viewed at this link: Federal Register: Airman Certification Standards and Practical Test Standards for Airmen; Incorporation by Reference.

ACS Companion Guides

The ACS Companion Guide for Pilots was updated with Change 2 on December 26, 2024, to remove an errant code (CA.IV.B.S5) from "Commercial Pilot for Airplane Category ACS Archived Codes" subsection of Section 8.

ACS Tips for Evaluators

In early **October 2024**, the 'ACS Tips for Evaluators' link was removed from the Airman Certification Standards Webpage as the checklist contained outdated and duplicative information.

Reference Materials

The Testing Standards Section recently completed revisions to our internal processes for developing, revising, and maintaining reference materials. These process improvements will result in programmatic efficiencies and increased agility in keeping pace with advancements in aviation safety and technologies.

Handbooks

We value and continue to rely upon our established partnerships with the aviation community when collaborating to develop, review, and revise handbook content. As our processes evolve, we will continue to ensure effective communications with our FAA and community partners, including a jointly designed schedule for handbook development and revision.

Inspection Authorization Information Guide

FAA-G-8082-19, Inspection Authorization Information Guide (with Change 1), dated **July 19, 2024**, is available on faa.gov. Revisions and updates are indicated by "change bars" in the margin of the document. Following is a summary of the changes:

- Removed references to the Government Printing Office (GPO).
- Replaced links and references to the Regulatory Guidance Library (RGL) with Dynamic Regulatory System (DRS) information.
- Updated broken hyperlinks.
- Updated information located in the section titled "Approving Major Repairs and Major Alterations / What to Look for During an Inspection", on pages 6 and 7.
- Updated information located in the "Condition" section, on page 14.
- Updated information located in the "Malfunction or Defect Reports" section, on pages 17 and 18.
- Updated title of AC 43-210A, on page A-17.
- Added "FAA Orders and Job Aids" section, on pages A-17 and A-18.

Balloon Flying Handbook

FAA-H-8083-11B, Balloon Flying Handbook, was posted to faa.gov on **December 26, 2024**. This revision supersedes FAA-H-8083-11A, dated 2008, and incorporates information from the Balloon Flying Handbook Addendum, dated 2016. Following is a summary of the changes:

- Removed/replaced obsolete publications/links.
- Replaced weather references where appropriate (i.e., AC 00-6, AC 00-24, AC 00-30, AC 00-45, AC 00-54, AC 00-57, with FAA-H-8083-28, Aviation Weather Handbook).
- Inserted second-class medical requirement for commercial balloon pilots.
- Inserted FAA WINGS Proficiency Program Information.
- Inserted additional language regarding ground assistance in Chapter 8, Landing & Recovery.
- Corrected student pilot paper certificate information.
- Removed references to Direct User Access Terminal Service (DUATS).
- Edited language to be more diverse, equal, and inclusive.

Glider Flying Handbook

FAA-H-8083-13B, Glider Flying Handbook, was posted to faa.gov on **December 26, 2024**. This revision supersedes FAA-H-8083-13A, dated 2013. Following is a summary of the changes:

- Updated hyperlinks to reflect current URLs.
- Incorporated corrections based on adjudicated feedback from industry stakeholders.
- Corrected graphics and equations as reviewed and recommended by the President of the Philadelphia Glider Council.
- Updated weather-related content to reflect current information.

Airman Knowledge Testing

Airman Knowledge Test Questions (AKTQs) are continuously monitored for accuracy and performance and are rigorously reviewed during regularly scheduled exam board meetings to ensure spelling and grammatical correctness; clarity; consistency in terminology, structure, and formatting; and alignment of content with FAA regulations, testing and certification standards, and reference materials and figures. Although the FAA does not provide sample questions or share active question content with stakeholders, information on new content, content no longer tested, and terminology changes are posted in the ATCA.

Aircraft Dispatcher (ADX) Exam

The TSS received feedback from an external stakeholder stating the ADX knowledge test contained questions not appropriate for inclusion on this exam. In response to this feedback, TSS subject matter experts (SMEs) collaborated with the Safety Standards Air Transportation Division (AFS-200) to research the issue and formulate a solution.

In **October 2024**, this collaboration resulted in the revision and/or replacement of ten questions, from the same subject area, which were boarded by the TSS, and vetted by AFS-200. Since there were no changes to the content of the questions or exam, the ADX knowledge test blueprint remains the same.

Following are two examples of questions replaced on the ADX exam:

When may ATC request a detailed report on an emergency even though a rule has not been violated?

    A. When the emergency occurs in controlled airspace.
    B. Anytime an emergency occurs.
    C. **When priority has been given.**

Which operational requirement must be observed when ferrying an air carrier airplane when one of its three turbine engines is inoperative?

    A. Weather conditions must exceed the basic VFR minimums for the entire route, including takeoff and landing.
    B. The flight cannot be conducted between official sunset and official sunrise.
    C. **The weather conditions at takeoff and destination must be VFR.**

BasicMed Program

Effective **November 18, 2024**, the Federal Aviation Administration published the amended BasicMed Regulations in accordance with the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024. The new rule revises the definition for covered aircraft to include the following:

- Increase in the number of allowable passengers from 5 to 6, and the total number of occupants from 6 to 7 for covered aircraft.
- Increase of the maximum aircraft takeoff weight from 6,000 lbs. to 12,500 lbs., while excluding transport category helicopters under Part 29.
- Designated pilot examiners may conduct practical tests or proficiency checks using BasicMed in aircraft that are covered by the BasicMed rule.

Furthermore, the FAA clarified that calendar months will be used in determining the duration of the comprehensive medical examination for those persons acting as the pilot in command or as a required flight crew member for operations under 14 CFR part 61, section 61.113 (i).

The FAA updated airman knowledge test questions which are affected by the new BasicMed rule for certificates and ratings.

Helicopter Knowledge Tests

The FAA's Airman Certificate Testing Service (ACTS) contract requires our testing vendor, PSI Services LLC, to assess FAA airman knowledge tests to ensure alignment with current industry standards for educational and psychological testing.

Effective **May 31, 2024**, the FAA added the following flight tasks to the Commercial Pilot for Rotorcraft Category Helicopter Rating ACS (FAA-S-ACS-16) and the Flight Instructor for Rotorcraft Category Helicopter Rating ACS (FAA-S-ACS-29):

- Flight Solely by Reference to Instruments
- Recovery from Unusual Flight Attitudes

Effective **January 27, 2025**, the following tests will have questions added to cover the appropriate knowledge elements of these two new flight tasks shown above:

- Commercial Pilot Helicopter Canadian Conversion (CCH)
- Commercial Pilot Helicopter (CRH)
- Flight Instructor Helicopter (FRH)
- Flight Instructor Helicopter (Added Rating) (HFA)

The team at PSI has completed assessing and analyzing the **Private Pilot Helicopter (PRH)**, **Commercial Pilot Helicopter (CRH)**, and **the Instrument Rating Helicopter (IRH)** knowledge tests. Following are the outcomes of these efforts:

- Test questions were reviewed to assure they align with the ACS and that correct answers are based on existing FAA references (i.e., handbooks).

- PSI's Psychometric Team concluded a reduction in allotted test times provides applicants with sufficient time to answer the total number of questions, including any validation questions. The following changes go into effect **January 27, 2025**:
  - The CRH test time decreases from 180 minutes to 150 minutes.
  - The IRH test time decreases from 150 minutes to 120 minutes.
  - The PRH test time decreases from 150 minutes to 120 minutes.

  Note: This information is updated here: ACS Knowledge Test Table: Corrected Allotted Times, *and will also be reflected in the January 27, 2025 version of the* FAA Airman Knowledge Testing Matrix.

  Note: Validation questions may be included on any exam, but do not count for or against the test taker's score. These unscored questions allow the FAA to accumulate data for evaluating the statistical performance of new questions before they are included in the sets of scored questions.

Learning Statement Codes

The current version of the Learning Statement Reference Guide for Airman Knowledge Testing is available at this link: Learning Statement Codes.

ACS Codes

Of the **89** FAA airman knowledge tests offered, **31** now have ACS codes displayed on the corresponding Airman Knowledge Test Reports (AKTR). These tests are indicated by light blue shading of the test code in the FAA Airman Knowledge Testing Matrix.

Matrix

The current version of the Matrix is available here. The next revised Matrix will be posted and in effect January 27, 2025.

Statistics

Norms Report

The 2023 1st Quarter School Norms vs. National Norms Report is available at this link: 2023 NORMs Statistics. This is the final posting of this report.

Airman Knowledge Tests Statistics

The CY 2023 Airman Knowledge Test statistics are available at this link: Airmen Knowledge Test Statistics.

Frequently Missed Knowledge Test ACS Codes

The Frequently Missed Knowledge Test ACS Codes Report is located under the '2024' tab of the Airman Knowledge Test Statistics Webpage. This report is based on recommendations provided by the Aviation Rulemaking Advisory Committee (ARAC) Airman Certification System (ACS) Call to Action (CtA) Subgroup (SG) and Data Team, and:

- is produced and posted to the Airman Testing Website on a quarterly basis.
- is based on data contained in the Safety Performance and Analysis System (SPAS), for the specified timeframe.
- includes data for ACS codes administered at least 100 times.
- displays ACS Codes missed more than 70% of the time on specific knowledge tests.