



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

# Advisory Circular

*M-494.4*

**Subject:** PILOT PROFICIENCY AWARD PROGRAM

**Date:** 6/1/83

**AC No:** 61-91C

**Initiated by:** AFO-306

**Change:**

1. PURPOSE. This advisory circular describes the Pilot Proficiency Award Program and outlines the eligibility requirements.

2. CANCELLATION. AC 61-91B dated 7/30/82 is cancelled.

3. BACKGROUND.

a. In July of 1977, a new pilot safety program was introduced to the public in FAA's Central Region (Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri) to cope with rising numbers of general aviation aircraft accidents attributable to pilot error. Designated the "Pilot Proficiency Program" it was designed to encourage general aviation pilots to voluntarily avail themselves of continuing training. A tie tack or lapel pin and a certificate of competence were given to those pilots who completed the program. Public response was sufficient to justify adopting the program in all regions in July 1979.

b. Federal Aviation Regulation Part 61.57 requires all pilots to obtain a flight and oral review with an appropriately-rated flight instructor once each two years (biennially) in order to act as pilot in command of an aircraft. The regulation does not prescribe any minimum flight time for the review nor does it specify the maneuvers to be flown. The Pilot Proficiency Award Program reinforces the Biennial Flight Review by providing a mini-flight course with minimum instruction times and selected maneuvers prescribed.

c. The program is demanding of pilots' time, critical of their performance, and provides an excellent opportunity for them to reevaluate their flight proficiency and knowledge and, at the same time, earn their wings and certificate.

4. WHO MAY PARTICIPATE. All pilots holding a private pilot certificate or higher and a current medical certificate, when required, may participate. Requests to participate in the program should be made to your local flight instructor, an appointed Accident Prevention Counselor, or the Flight Standards or General Aviation District Office.

5. INCENTIVE AWARDS - PILOT WINGS AND CERTIFICATE. Upon completion of each phase of the four-phase program, pilots become eligible to wear and are presented a distinctive lapel or tie pin (wings) and certificate of completion. The Phase I wings are plain bronze tone, Phase II wings are silver tone with a star added, Phase III wings are gold tone with a star and wreath, and the Phase IV wings have a simulated ruby mounted in the shield. No complimentary wings are given. All pilots, regardless of type of certificate, ratings, or position

(including FAA personnel), must earn the right to wear the Pilot Proficiency Wings.

**PHASE I****PHASE II****PHASE III****PHASE IV**

6. **PHASE I TRAINING REQUIREMENTS.** Pilots may select the category and class of aircraft in which they desire to receive their operational training. All training requirements must be completed within 120 days after beginning training under the Pilot Proficiency Award Program. Certain training and flight maneuvers with specified training minimums have been established for airplanes, helicopters, gliders, and balloons. The training profile chosen represents those phases of operation for each category of aircraft that have been identified from accident reports as most likely to produce accidents. Newly certificated private pilots are eligible for the certificate and wings if they meet the training and seminar requirements within the 120-day time frame.

a. Airplanes.

(1) One hour of flight training to include basic aircraft control, stalls, turns, and other maneuvers directed to mastery of the airplane.

(2) One hour of flight training to include precision approaches, takeoffs and landings including crosswind, soft field, and short field techniques.

(3) One hour of instrument training in an airplane, instrument simulator, or training device.

b. Helicopters.

(1) One hour of ground training to include use of the rotorcraft flight manual to determine operating limitations, weight and balance computations, performance data, aircraft servicing, use of optional equipment, and normal emergency procedures.

(2) One hour of flight training to include airport and traffic pattern operations, including departures from a hover, normal and crosswind approaches and landings, maximum performance takeoffs, and steep approaches.

(3) One hour of flight training to include autorotative descents, power failure at a hover, settling-with-power, systems or equipment malfunctions, slope takeoffs and landings, pinnacle/rooftop takeoffs and landings, and lost procedures.

c. Gliders.

(1) One hour or three flights to include - basic aircraft control, airspeed control, maneuvering at slow airspeeds, and inadvertent stalls from normally anticipated attitudes.

(2) One hour or three flights to include - launch procedures, proper position during tow, emergency procedures such as a slack line or tow rope failure, and tow release procedures.

(3) One hour or three flights to include - safe thermalling procedures including flight in close proximity to other aircraft, maneuvers at various performance speeds, demonstration of best lift over drag (L/D) and minimum sink, and precision approaches and landings.

d. Balloons.

(1) One hour of ground training to include fuel management, refueling, proper inflation procedures, review of the flight manual, and proper weather check.

(2) One hour of flight training to include precision approaches (touch and go), level flight, rapid descent and levelout, and simulated landing in a congested area.

(3) One hour of flight training to include relighting pilot light, simulated high wind/short field landings, and other simulated emergency situations.

e. Safety Meeting. All applicants must attend at least one aviation-related safety meeting, seminar, or clinic conducted under the auspices of the FAA District Office Accident Prevention Program to meet the requirement for the award. The District Office Accident Prevention Specialist or an Accident Prevention Counselor may certify to the applicant's attendance at the meeting.

7. PHASE II, III, AND IV---REQUIREMENTS.

a. Twelve months after the date of meeting the final requirement for the Phase I award, a pilot may initiate action to qualify for the Phase II award. To qualify for the Phase II award, a pilot must repeat the same requirements under the same rules as stipulated in Phase I.

b. Twelve months after the date of meeting the final requirement for the Phase II award, a pilot may initiate action to qualify for the Phase III award. To qualify for the Phase III award, a pilot must repeat the same requirements as for Phase I.

c. Twelve months after the date of meeting the requirements for the Phase III award, a pilot may initiate action to qualify for the Phase IV award. To qualify for the Phase IV award, a pilot must repeat the requirements as for Phase I.

8. PILOT PROFICIENCY AWARD EARNED BY FLIGHT INSTRUCTORS. Pilot Proficiency Wings may be earned by flight instructors, based upon the number of pilots they certify through the program and their participation in safety clinics. Certification that they have provided the training required for completion of steps (1), (2), and (3), outlined in paragraph 6a, b, c, or d to three pilots (minimum of nine hours instruction) earns the Phase I wings. Certification of three additional pilots is required to earn Phase II wings, and another three pilots must be certified before earning the Phase III wings. After completion of the Phase III requirements, Phase IV may be earned by successful completion of an evaluation or proficiency flight with a designated flight instructor examiner or an FAA operations inspector. Instructors must either attend or participate in a safety clinic to qualify for each phase of wings.

**9. AWARDING OF THE PILOT PROFICIENCY WINGS AND CERTIFICATE.**

a. As pilots complete each step of the training outlined in paragraph 6 of this advisory circular, their logbook or other proficiency record must be endorsed by the person who gave the instruction. That endorsement should read substantively as follows:

Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_, holder of pilot certificate  
no. \_\_\_\_\_, has satisfactorily completed the training  
requirements outlined in Advisory Circular 61-91C, paragraph 6a, b, c,  
or d (state which).


/s/ J. Jones

652472 CFI

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b. The Pilot Proficiency Award Certificate and the appropriate wings are awarded after the pilot's logbook or other proficiency record is presented to an Accident Prevention Specialist for verification of training and their attendance at a safety meeting, clinic, or seminar, per paragraph 6e of this advisory circular.

10. FINIS. The intent of the Pilot Proficiency Award Program is to provide the incentive for pilots to establish a personal recurrency training program on a regular schedule. Air carriers, the FAA, and the military services require regular recurrent training for their pilots to assure that they maintain a high level of proficiency. Can general aviation afford anything less? Safe flight is no accident.

  
KENNETH S. HUNT  
Director of Flight Operations

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Par 9

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