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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

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FILE

Subject: USE OF DISTRACTIONS DURING PILOT CERTIFICATION FLIGHT TESTS

1. PURPOSE. This advisory circular announces the Federal Aviation Administration's policy of incorporating into all flight tests the use of certain distractions during the performance of flight test maneuvers.

2. BACKGROUND.

a. According to the General Aviation Pilot Stall Awareness Study (Report No. FAA-RD-77-26), stall/spin related accidents accounted for about twenty-five percent of the total general aviation fatal accidents. National Transportation Safety Board statistics reveal that most stall/spin accidents occurred when the pilot's attention was diverted from the primary task of flying the aircraft. Sixty percent of stall/spin accidents occurred during takeoff or landing; and twenty percent were preceded by engine failure (a distraction). Other distractions included preoccupation inside or outside the cockpit while changing power, configuration or trim; maneuvering to avoid other traffic; or clearing hazardous obstacles during takeoff and climb.

b. The intentional practice of stalls and spins seldom resulted in an accident. The real danger was inadvertent stalls induced by distractions during routine flight situations.

3. DISCUSSION. In view of the data revealed by the Stall Awareness Study, the Federal Aviation Administration has established the use of certain distractions in conjunction with pilot certification flight tests. Distractions may be included in the evaluation of performance to determine that applicants possess the skills required to cope with distractions while maintaining the degree of aircraft control required for safe flight.

4. EXAMPLES OF DISTRACTIONS FOR A GIVEN MANEUVER. During an applicant's performance of "S" Turns Across A Road, the Federal Aviation Administration inspector or other authorized pilot examiner may observe and note performance while providing distractions such as requesting the applicant to:

- a. Simulate radio communications.
- b. Read outside air temperature gauge.
- c. Remove object from the glove compartment.
- d. Identify terrain features or objects on the ground.
- e. Climb 200 feet and maintain altitude, then descend 200 feet and maintain altitude.
- f. Reverse course after a series of "S" turns.
- g. Identify fields suitable for forced landings.

5. **SUMMARY.** At the time of their next revision, all flight test guides will be changed to include distractions appropriate to selected flight maneuvers listed under pilot operations. During the interim, Federal Aviation Administration inspectors and designated pilot examiners may incorporate the use of realistic distractions during the performance of flight test maneuvers.



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