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Department of Transportation

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Parts 121 and 135

**Anti-Drug Program for Personnel
Engaged in Specified Aviation Activities;
Final Rule**

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

14 CFR Parts 121 and 135

[Docket No. 25148; Amdt. No. 121-225, 135-40]

RIN 2120-AD65

Anti-Drug Program for Personnel Engaged in Specified Aviation Activities**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.**ACTION:** Final rule.

SUMMARY: On November 14, 1988, the FAA issued a final rule requiring specified aviation employers and operators to submit and implement anti-drug programs for personnel performing sensitive safety- and security-related functions. This final rule modifies that rule by excluding most entities conducting operations that do not require a part 121 or 135 certificate. Entities conducting sightseeing flights in an airplane or rotorcraft for compensation or hire will continue to be covered by the rule.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 5, 1991.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. William R. McAndrew, Office of Aviation Medicine, Drug Abatement Branch (AAM-220), Federal Aviation Administration, 400 7th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590; telephone (202) 366-6710.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Background**

On November 14, 1988, the FAA issued a final anti-drug rule requiring certain aviation employers and operators to develop and to implement an anti-drug program for employees performing specified aviation activities (53 FR 47024; November 21, 1988). The FAA has amended the final rule several times to address implementation problems and clarify the requirements of the rule.

After issuance of the final rule, the FAA became aware of the need to reevaluate the inclusion of those aviation operators otherwise excluded from part 121 and part 135 requirements. For this reason, the FAA extended for one year the compliance deadline for operators as defined in § 135.1(c) of the Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) (14 CFR 135.1(c)) (hereinafter "135.1(c) operators") (55 FR 10756; March 22, 1990). The operations conducted by these 135.1(c) operators include student instruction, nonstop sightseeing flights conducted within a 25-mile radius of the airport of takeoff, ferry or training

flights, aerial work operations, sightseeing flights in hot air balloons, nonstop flights within a 25-mile radius of the airport of takeoff for parachute jumps, FAA-approved helicopter flights conducted within a 25-mile radius of the airport, rotorcraft operations under part 133, and Federal election campaign flights conducted under § 91.321 (formerly 91.59).

In the notice extending the compliance deadline, the FAA stated that it would evaluate the need for further rulemaking to remove these operators from the rule. As a result, the FAA conducted a thorough review of the appropriate scope of the anti-drug rule.

Based on its review, the FAA issued an NPRM on February 12, 1991 (56 FR 6542) proposing to drop virtually all of the 135.1(c) operators from the coverage of the anti-drug rule. The one exception was sightseeing flights covered by § 135.1(b)(2) that are conducted in airplanes or rotorcraft for compensation or hire.

Discussion of Comments*General Overview*

The comment period for the NPRM closed April 1, 1991. The FAA received over 700 comments in response to the NPRM. Of this number, approximately 260 comments were received from agricultural operators, approximately 290 from flight instructors, over 30 from hot air balloonists, and over 60 from glider owners and pilots. Many commenters fell into more than one category.

The majority of the commenters stated their support for the proposed rule. Those commenters that went beyond a summary statement of support for, or opposition to, the proposed change varied in scope. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and approximately 9 other commenters opposed the proposed rule.

*Specific Issues***Clarification of Covered Operators**

Over 90 commenters, all of whom strongly supported the proposed rule, requested that the FAA define "operator" in § 135.1(c) to make it clear that the anti-drug rule applies only to those operators who conduct sightseeing flights in airplanes or rotorcraft for compensation or hire. Most of these commenters were interested in ensuring that sightseeing conducted in hot air balloons or gliders be excluded from the scope of the anti-drug rule. Several of these commenters noted that since the preamble discussion in Notice No. 91-6 in several places refers to "aviation entities conducting sightseeing flights

with airplanes and rotorcraft," they believe their requested addition of the words "in an airplane or rotorcraft" to § 135.1(c) is consistent with the intent of the NPRM.

The Soaring Society of America stated that adding the words "in an airplane or rotorcraft" to § 135.1(c) is acceptable, but states that a preferred alternative is to amend both § 135.1 (b)(2) and (b)(5) so that the former will cover "powered aircraft" and the latter "unpowered aircraft." SSA admits that amending § 135.1(c) "is simpler and summarizes regulatory intent exactly."

Several commenters recommended that all sightseeing flights should be excluded or that the applicability to sightseeing flights should be limited in some way so that not every compensated sightseeing flight in an airplane or rotorcraft would be covered. One commenter suggested that the applicability could exclude flights within 25 nautical miles of the departure airport in airplanes with five passengers or fewer or that the applicability include only scheduled sightseeing flights. Other suggested cutoffs were: Only test persons flying more than 25 hours per year of sightseeing flights; exclude operators who use small airplanes of six seats or fewer; and specifically target the intended sightseeing operations by aircraft size, type, and/or crew complement.

FAA Response

As was stated in the preamble to the NPRM, the FAA's intent is to include under the anti-drug program only those sightseeing flights covered by § 135.1(b)(2) that are conducted in airplanes and rotorcraft for compensation or hire. The final rule language in § 135.1(c) has been changed to clearly reflect this intent.

The FAA did not adopt the Soaring Society of America's recommendation to amend § 135.1(b). The suggested change would affect more than the scope of the anti-drug rule, since § 135.1(b) addresses the general exclusions from part 135.

The FAA does not agree that some or all commercial sightseeing flights in airplanes or rotorcraft should be excluded from application of the rule. Commercial sightseeing operations usually involve members of the general public who have paid for a ride in an airplane or rotorcraft. For purposes of the anti-drug rule, the FAA has determined that the safety implications of such operations are comparable to that of other operations that routinely involve carriage of passengers. These passengers should be given the protection inherent in other passenger-

carrying operations for compensation or hire that have an approved anti-drug program, without regard to size or scope of the operations or the number of flights per year a particular operator might conduct.

Clarification of Covered Instructors

Several commenters stated that the requirements concerning testing of instructors should be clarified. These commenters noted that the NPRM proposed to remove from the scope of the anti-drug rule student instruction conducted under § 135.1(b)(1), thus intending to leave under the scope of the anti-drug rule only instruction conducted by parts 121 and 135 certificate holders as part of their required training programs (see subpart N of part 121 and subpart H of part 135). Since some aviation entities that hold part 121 or 135 certificates also provide student instruction under parts 61 and 141 that is completely unrelated to their training program required by part 121 or 135, these commenters want assurance that the rule would not apply to this instruction.

FAA Response

The FAA agrees with these commenters. The NPRM was intended to remove from rule coverage student instruction that is unrelated to the holding of or operations under a part 121 or 135 certificate. Since student instruction under parts 61 and 141 could continue to be given by an aviation entity holding a part 121 or 135 certificate if it were to surrender its certificate, it is obviously not related to its certificated operations. Hence, this instruction is not within the intended scope of the rule. In a parallel situation previously addressed, the FAA issued guidance that flight crewmembers of aviation entities holding part 121 or 135 certificates are not required to be drug tested if the flight operations they conduct are not subject to parts 121 or 135, e.g., corporate flights conducted under part 91. Similarly, the FAA has advised that employees of parts 121 and 135 certificate holders performing security functions unrelated to aviation operations under parts 121 and 135 are not covered by the anti-drug rule, e.g., security guards at the corporate headquarters. The FAA takes this opportunity to reaffirm its position that the scope of the anti-drug rule is rooted in the operations subject to parts 121 and 135.

Comments Opposing the NPRM

The NTSB is opposed to the proposed rule. The board maintains that, "while these commercial operators are not

providing transportation to passengers except in highly restricted circumstances, they often fly in the same air space as other parts 121 and 135 operators." The NTSB is also concerned that flight instructors are being considered for exemption from the regulations, since they are "role models" for their students.

Most other commenters that opposed the proposed rule stated that these operations are conducted in the same airspace in which part 121 and part 135 operations are conducted and believe that there is a potential threat to the traveling public. One commenter, a drug testing consortium, asserted that the FAA has succumbed to political pressure, electing to exclude the 135.1(c) operations with insufficient justification. The commenter believed that public safety would be adversely affected by the change. Additionally, the commenter maintained that FAA's cost figures of \$950 per year per affected employee are too high and insupportable.

FAA Response

The FAA has concluded that the overall effect of this amendment will be to the benefit of the public. Drug testing programs involve both cost and intrusiveness; therefore, regulations to require such programs are properly limited to situations where there is a significant threat potential to the public. Moreover, by limiting the applicability of the anti-drug rule to aviation entities that provide transportation services to the public, the FAA and the industry will best be able to utilize their resources to increase aviation safety.

With regard to the comments of the NTSB noting that operations of the types listed in § 135.1(b) are often conducted in the same airspace as operations conducted under part 121 and part 135, this fact alone is not sufficient justification for including them in the drug program. As stated in the preamble of the NPRM, the operations listed in § 135.1(b) do not require operating certificates from the FAA and historically have not been subject to the stringent operating rules of either part 121 or part 135. The NPRM proposed to exclude those operators who, under the FAA's historical statutory and regulatory delineations, are sufficiently tangential to commercial aviation to warrant a lesser degree of regulatory oversight. In addition, the FAA never proposed to apply the anti-drug rule requirements to all of the other operations conducted under part 91 even though these operations also use the same airspace as is used in operations under parts 121 and 135.

Neither is the FAA persuaded that being a "role model" is sufficient reason to retain flight instructors under the drug testing rule unless the instruction is related to part 121 or 135 operations. Of course, many individuals giving instruction separate from a part 121 or 135 context will be covered by a drug testing program as a result of other aviation activities, e.g., flying for a part 121 or 135 certificate holder.

In response to the comment that FAA's cost figures were too high and insupportable, the FAA does not dispute the fact that fees could be substantially lower than \$950 per year. The NPRM stated that the maximum cost savings to any operator was estimated to be \$950 per affected employee per year in 1990 dollars.

Comments Suggesting Rule Changes Beyond The Scope of The Rule

Approximately 19 commenters suggested other rule changes beyond the scope of Notice 91-6. Issues addressed include proposals for other kinds of drug testing programs, public funding of drug testing, and responsibilities of other government agencies.

Regulatory Evaluation Summary

Executive Order 12291, dated February 17, 1981, directs Federal Agencies to promulgate new regulations or modify existing regulations only if the potential benefits to society for the regulatory change outweigh the potential costs to society.

This rulemaking will eliminate aviation entities currently defined as § 135.1(c) operators, except those conducting sightseeing flights in airplanes and rotorcraft for compensation and hire from being covered by and needing to be in compliance with the requirements of the anti-drug rule. The original analysis of the anti-drug rule included the costs and benefits for all affected entities and concluded that the overall rule had a positive cost-benefit ratio. This rule will exclude some of those entities (i.e., most § 135.1(c) operators). While the potential public safety risk for those being excluded would be less than for those remaining under the anti-drug rule, the compliance costs for those excluded by this rule could have been expected to be higher. As a result, the FAA concludes that, for those remaining entities covered by the anti-drug rule, the benefits will exceed the costs by an even greater amount.

Regulatory Flexibility Determination

The FAA has determined that most of the § 135.1(c) operators are small

entities each of which employ few affected employees. The exclusion of these operators, other than those conducting sightseeing flights in an airplane or rotorcraft, from compliance with the anti-drug rule will not have a significant positive or negative impact on these entities. The Agency has determined that this rulemaking will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. The estimated \$950 maximum cost savings to any operator per year per affected employee, is substantially less than the \$3,800 threshold in 1990 dollars derived by FAA for significant economic impact. Less than one-third of the small entities subject to the proposed rulemaking would meet the threshold for significant impact.

Trade Impact Statement

This rule will affect only a limited number of domestic aviation operations performed under the provisions of the FARs; therefore, it will have no impact on trade opportunities for United States firms doing business overseas or foreign firms doing business in the United States.

Paperwork Reduction Act Approval

The recordkeeping and reporting requirements of the final anti-drug rule, issued on November 14, 1988, were previously submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for approval in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980. The OMB approval is under control number 2120-0535. Because this final rule does not amend the recordkeeping and reporting requirements, it is not necessary to amend the prior approval received from OMB.

Federalism Implications

The final rule adopted herein will not have substantial direct effects on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. Therefore, in accordance with Executive Order 12612, the FAA has determined that this notice does not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

Conclusion

For the reasons discussed in the preamble, and based on the findings in the Regulatory Flexibility Determination

and the International Trade Impact Analysis, the FAA has determined that this regulation is not major under Executive Order 12291. In addition, the FAA certifies that this regulation will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act. This regulation is considered significant under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034; February 26, 1979).

List of Subjects

14 CFR Part 121

Air carriers, Air transportation, Aircraft, Aircraft pilots, Airmen, Airplanes, Aviation safety, Drug abuse, Drugs, Narcotics, Pilots, Safety, Transportation.

14 CFR Part 135

Air carriers, Air taxi, Air transportation, Aircraft, Airmen, Airplanes, Aviation safety, Drug abuse, Drugs, Narcotics, Pilots, Safety, Transportation.

The Amendment

In consideration of the foregoing, the Federal Aviation Administration amends parts 121 and 135 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR parts 121 and 135) as follows:

PART 121—CERTIFICATION AND OPERATIONS: DOMESTIC, FLAG, AND SUPPLEMENTAL AIR CARRIERS AND COMMERCIAL OPERATORS OF LARGE AIRCRAFT

1. The authority citation for part 121 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. App. 1354(a), 1355, 1356, 1357, 1401, 1421-1430, 1472, 1485, and 1502; 49 U.S.C. 106(g) (Revised, Pub. L. 97-449, January 12, 1983).

2. Appendix I of Part 121 is amended in section II by revising the definitions for "employee" and "employer" and in Section IX. A. by revising paragraph (5), as set forth below.

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II. Definitions • • •
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Employee is a person who performs, either directly or by contract, a function listed in section III of this appendix for a part 121 certificate holder, a part 135 certificate holder, an operator as defined in § 135.1(c) of this chapter, or an air traffic control facility not operated by, or under contract with, the FAA or the U.S. military. Provided, however,

that an employee who works for an employer who holds a part 135 certificate and who holds a part 121 certificate is considered to be an employee of the part 121 certificate holder for the purposes of this appendix.

"Employer" is a part 121 certificate holder, a part 135 certificate holder, an operator as defined in § 135.1(c) of this chapter, or an air traffic control facility not operated by, or under contract with, the FAA or the U.S. military. Provided, however, that an employer may use a person to perform a function listed in section III of this appendix, who is not included under that employer's drug program, if that person is subject to the requirements of another employer's FAA-approved anti-drug program.

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IX. Employer's Drug Testing Plan. A. Schedule for submission of plans and implementation. • • •
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(5) Each employer or operator, who becomes subject to the rule as a result of the FAA's issuance of a part 121 or part 135 certificate or as a result of beginning operations listed in § 135.1(c) shall submit an anti-drug plan to the FAA for approval, within the timeframes of paragraphs (2), (3), or (4) of this section, according to the type and size of the category of operations. For purposes of applicability of the timeframes, the date that an employer becomes subject to the requirements of this appendix is substituted for December 21, 1988.

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PART 135—AIR TAXI OPERATORS AND COMMERCIAL OPERATORS

3. The authority citation for part 135 is revised to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. App. 1354(a), 1355, 1421-1431, and 1502; 49 U.S.C. 106(g) (Revised, Pub. L. 97-449, January 12, 1983).

4. Section 135.1(c) is revised to read as follows:

§ 135.1 Applicability.

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(c) For the purpose of §§ 135.249, 135.251, and 135.353 "operator" means any person or entity conducting non-stop sightseeing flights for compensation or hire in an airplane or rotorcraft that begin and end at the same airport and are conducted within a 25 statute mile radius of that airport.

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Issued in Washington, D.C., on August 30, 1991.

James B. Bussey,
Administrator.

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