

# NOTICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

N 8700.27

2/4/04

Cancellation  
Date: 2/4/05

## **SUBJ: APPROPRIATE ROLE OF INSPECTORS DURING FLIGHT CHECKS**

**1. PURPOSE.** This notice provides clarification to existing guidance for inspectors who are assigned to perform flight checks.

**2. DISTRIBUTION.** This notice is distributed to the division level in the Flight Standards Service in Washington headquarters; to the branch level in the regional Flight Standards divisions; to the Flight Standards District Offices; and to the Regulatory Standards Division at the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center. This notice is also distributed electronically to the division level in the Flight Standards Service in Washington headquarters and to all regional Flight Standards divisions and district offices. This information is also available on the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Web site at: [http://www.faa.gov/avr/afs/notices/N 8700-27.doc](http://www.faa.gov/avr/afs/notices/N%208700-27.doc).

**3. BACKGROUND.** A recent flight check ended with the crash and destruction of a helicopter. At the time of the accident, the FAA inspector assigned to give the check was demonstrating autorotation techniques.

**a.** After the accident, the inspector explained that the pilot had demonstrated an autorotation that met minimum standards but could have been better. The inspector then took over the controls to demonstrate better autorotation techniques. The accident occurred with the inspector at the controls.

**NOTE: The preliminary investigation indicates that the accident was caused by a mechanical problem, but that is not the concern of this notice.**

**b.** This raised an issue for us. Why did the inspector think that instruction during a flight check was appropriate? When asked why he had left the evaluation role and entered into an instruction role, the inspector stated that his goal was to improve safety and that there was nothing in the guidance (FAA orders) that precluded this.

**NOTE: It may also be appropriate to review the formal training given to inspectors regarding the appropriateness of flight instruction or demonstrations during the conduct of flight checks.**

**4. GUIDANCE.** After a review of Order 8700.1, General Aviation Operations Inspector's Handbook, we determined that guidance regarding flight instructing or demonstrating by FAA inspectors evaluating airmen must be clarified. Order 8700.1, volume 2, chapter 1, section 2, paragraph 1B, Advice and Assistance, is replaced with new paragraph 1B, Policy Concerning Giving Flight Training, a Demonstration, Advice, or Assistance During a Practical Test. (See appendix 1.)

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Distribution: A-W(FS)-2; A-X(FS)-3; A-FFS-7(LTD); AMA-200 (80 cys)  
(Electronically: A-W(FS)-2; A-X(FS)-2; A-FFS-7)

Initiated by: AFS-800

**5. DISPOSITION.** The information in this notice will be incorporated into Order 8700.1 in a future change. This notice was developed by the General Aviation and Commercial Division, AFS-800. Direct any questions regarding this notice to AFS-800 at (202) 267-8212.

/s/

John M. Allen for  
James J. Ballough  
Director, Flight Standards Service

**APPENDIX 1. ORDER 8700.1, VOLUME 2, CHAPTER 1, SECTION 2, PARAGRAPH 1B****SECTION 2. INSPECTOR QUALIFICATIONS AND STATUS****1. INSPECTOR STATUS DURING PRACTICAL TESTS.**

**A. Pilot-in-Command Status.** An inspector conducts a practical test to observe and evaluate an applicant's ability to perform the procedures and maneuvers required for the pilot certificate or rating.

(1) The inspector is not pilot-in-command (PIC) of the aircraft during the practical test unless acting in that capacity for the flight, or a portion of the flight, by prior arrangement with the applicant or other PIC.

(2) Regardless of the type of aircraft used during a practical test, the applicant and the inspector are not, with respect to each other (or other occupants authorized by the inspector), subject to the requirements or limitations for the carriage of passengers specified in 14 CFR part 61.

**B. Policy Concerning Giving Flight Training, a Demonstration, Advice, or Assistance During a Practical Test.**

(1) It is inappropriate for an aviation safety inspector (ASI) to provide flight training and/or to teach techniques to an applicant during a practical test. The role of an ASI during the practical test is to evaluate an applicant's performance against the appropriate practical test standards (PTS). However, this policy does not preclude an ASI from acting as a student and manipulating the controls during the practical test for a flight instructor certification test when the purpose is for evaluating the flight instructor applicant's teaching ability. Nor does this policy prevent an ASI, when administering a practical test, from trying to relax or otherwise reduce the stress level of an applicant during the test. Providing such help does not change the status of an ASI. Before beginning the practical test, an ASI should discuss these issues with the applicant as part of the overall practical test briefing described in section 3, paragraph 3 of this chapter.

(2) If an ASI has to take over the flight controls or assist in the manipulation of the flight controls during a practical test, such action is disqualifying for the applicant. The ASI must issue a Notice of Disapproval of Application to the applicant. An exception to this policy is where, through no fault of the applicant, the ASI has to take over the flight controls or assist in the manipulation of the flight controls during the practical test if the ASI determines life

or property is at risk (e.g., to avoid another aircraft, to avoid weather, to avoid a violation of airspace rules, or take corrective action as a result of an aircraft maintenance problem, etc.). In this case, once the situation is resolved, the practical test will resume.

**C. Physical Location of Inspector.**

(1) With certain exceptions, an inspector accompanies an applicant in the aircraft during the practical test. However, the inspector may observe from the ground an applicant's performance of autorotations to touchdown during airline transport pilot (ATP) or flight instructor certification practical tests in helicopters if the applicant is the sole occupant of the aircraft. Similarly, the inspector may observe from the ground or another airplane the performance of aerial maneuvers by an applicant flying a single-control aircraft (for example, a gyroplane).

(2) During practical tests given on aircraft requiring a flightcrew of two or more, the inspector should give the practical test from a designated jump seat or place in the cabin from which the flight can be adequately observed. An industry pilot who is qualified to act as PIC in that type aircraft must then occupy the other seat.

(a) This arrangement allows the inspector to devote full attention to the practical test rather than being involved with performing the duties of a flightcrew member. It also allows the inspector to assess the command ability of the applicant, as well as to observe flightcrew coordination.

(b) This is not intended, however, to preclude an inspector from exercising discretion in deciding which seat to occupy during the practical test. Such factors as aircraft seating configuration, the inspector's personal knowledge of the person proposing to occupy the pilot seat, and the inspector's skills, limitations, recent experience, and qualifications should be considered.

(c) When operators request that one of their qualified pilots occupy the pilot seat during the test for valid reasons; i.e., for insurance purposes, that request should be honored unless the inspector has reason to believe the pilot furnished by the operator lacks the experience and skill to conduct the test prescribed by the inspector. Any disagreement over the conduct of the test should be referred to the regional office for final decision.

(3) Inspectors or examiners may observe free balloon flight tests from the ground, regardless of whether it is a single or multiplace balloon.

**3. GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR PRACTICAL TESTS.** Inspectors must possess the pilot and flight instructor certificates in the category and class for which they conduct certification tests.

**A. ATP Certificates.** Practical tests for the issuance of ATP certificates shall be given only by inspectors who possess an ATP certificate with appropriate category, class, and type ratings. However, an inspector conducting an ATP practical test in a small helicopter need not have a type....

**NOTE: Remaining text in Order 8700.1 continues on page 1-4.**