United States Department of the Interior
Office of Aviation Services
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DOI OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES MEMORANDUM (OPM) 14-16

Subject:	Flight Evaluations for Fleet Pilots
Effective Date:	October 1, 2013
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1. **Purpose.** This OPM clarifies the requirements for fleet pilot flight evaluations.

2. **Authority.** This policy is established by the Director, Department of the Interior (DOI), Office of Aviation Services (OAS), in accordance with the provisions of Departmental Manual 112 DM 10 and 350 DM 1, Secretarial Order 3322 dated August 23, 2012.

3. **Definitions.**

   A. Additional Aircraft: See *Assigned Aircraft.*

   B. Alternate Aircraft: See *Assigned Aircraft.*

   C. Annual Flight Evaluation: The flight evaluation required every 12 months that may be IFR or VFR; also known as an equipment check, competency check, primary check, compliance check, pilot evaluation qualifications check or flight check.

   D. Assigned Aircraft:

      1. Primary Aircraft: The aircraft designated by the pilot's supervisor or as indicated in the pilot's Position Description; the pilot's principle aircraft and configuration.
      2. Additional Aircraft: Another aircraft within the same category (e.g., airplane) as a pilot's primary aircraft or another configuration of the pilot's primary aircraft
      3. Alternate Aircraft: Another aircraft in a category different than the pilot's primary aircraft.

   E. Base Month: The calendar month in which pilots normally complete their annual flight evaluation in their primary aircraft. It is the calendar month that a pilot's primary aircraft annual flight evaluation expires. Additionally, pilot training (OPM-22) compliance is verified at this time.

F. Calendar Month: A flight evaluation expires the last day of the month in which it is required regardless of the day it was given. (i.e., a VFR flight evaluation given on 1 January 2010 will have an expiration date of 31 January 2011.)

G. Configurations:

Airplane
1. Amphibious floats
2. Retractable landing gear
3. Conventional landing gear
4. Floats
5. Large tundra tires (tires greater than 8.50x6)
6. Skis and wheel skis
7. Wheels

Helicopter
1. Fixed floats
2. Skids
3. Wheels (fixed or retractable)

H. Differences Flight Evaluation: A flight evaluation that focuses on the differences in equipment operated.

I. Differences Training: Required ground and/or flight training, given by an authorized instructor, for a crew member who has qualified on a particular aircraft and is qualifying on a variation or additional configuration of the same aircraft or like make and model (see OPM-23) in the same capacity i.e., Cessna 206G PIC to Cessna 206H PIC. This training is intended to educate crew members in the different procedures, techniques, and/or handling characteristics of individual aircraft and/or equipment. Training must be documented in pilot log books or OAS Forms 50/51 as appropriate.

J. DOI Initial Flight Evaluation: The first flight evaluation given for a make and model or like make and model (see OPM-23, DOI Like Make and Models). An initial flight evaluation is required for each make and model. An initial flight evaluation is also required for each configuration. For new pilots, the month in which they complete the initial pilot evaluation in their primary aircraft becomes their base month.

K. Evaluation Window: The period in which an evaluation should be conducted. The normal evaluation window is the pre-expiration month, base month and grace month.

L. Expiration Date: On pilot cards and related documents, the expiration date is the same as the due or required date. Expiration dates are based on calendar months, i.e., a flight evaluation given any day in January will expire the last day of January in the subsequent year(s). The grace month is NOT included in the expiration, due or required date.

M. Expiration Month: The calendar month a flight evaluation expires. A pilot's primary aircraft, "expiration month", is that pilot's base month. For additional aircraft or alternate aircraft use the term, "expiration month", not base month.

N. Grace Month: The calendar month immediately following the base/expiration month during which a pilot can continue operate without having completed a requisite

evaluation. The purpose of the grace month is to allow the pilot and inspectors some flexibility in case weather, mission requirements, aircraft availability, etc. prevent an evaluation from being completed in the base/expiration month. In no case may a pilot operate beyond the grace month without a required flight evaluation. A flight evaluation given within the grace month is considered completed in the calendar month it expired.

O. IFR Flight Evaluation: Instrument Flight Rules flight evaluations are required every 6 months when operating IFR; also known as a semiannual IFR flight evaluation or an IFR check.

P. PIC: Pilot in Command

Q. Primary Aircraft: See *Assigned Aircraft.*

R. Technically Advanced Aircraft: An aircraft with electronic flight instruments and/or a multifunction display(s); an IFR GPS; and an integrated autopilot.

4. Policy Clarifications.

A. From 351 DM 3.5 C (1): Pilots are responsible for scheduling and successfully completing required flight evaluations. Those who fail to do so shall be removed from DOI flight status, except for approved training or flight evaluations.

1. To ensure timely completion of flight evaluations, fleet pilots should contact their OAS Regional Office to discuss possible evaluation dates as far in advance as practical. Pilot inspections are normally scheduled by zones to maximize travel efficiency. Fleet pilots in cooperation with OAS inspectors should schedule evaluations to coincide with planned zones. In any case, fleet pilots must notify their OAS Regional Office of their evaluation requirements a minimum of two weeks (14 calendar days) in advance of the desired evaluation date.

2. Scheduling of flight evaluations is especially critical if a pilot is in their grace month. If they have not done so already, pilots in their grace month should contact their OAS Regional Office as soon as possible to schedule an evaluation. Pilots who fail to provide OAS with at least two weeks' notice may find there are no inspectors available to evaluate them before the end of their grace month.

B. From 351 DM 3.5 C (2)(a): "VFR flight evaluations shall be valid for a period of 13 months."

1. VFR flight evaluations are required every twelve (12) calendar months. With the grace month applied, a VFR flight evaluation is valid for 13 calendar months.

2. PICs operating only one aircraft type and configuration; their annual flight evaluation must be accomplished within the evaluation window based on the pilot's base month.

3. PICs operating multiple aircraft and/or configurations; their primary aircraft annual flight evaluation must coincide with their base month. Additional and alternate aircraft flight evaluations may or may not fall in the base month. Aircraft and/or configuration flight evaluations that do not fall in the base month will have a separate expiration month.

4. VFR flight evaluations are conducted in accordance with the minimum performance standards established in the appropriate Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Commercial Pilot Practical Test Standards (PTS).

C. From 351 DM 3.5 C (2)(b): "IFR flight evaluations shall be valid for a period of 6 months."

1. When applicable, IFR flight evaluations are required every six (6) calendar months. With the grace month applied, an IFR flight evaluation is valid for seven (7) calendar months.

   NOTE: When operating IFR in the grace month it is the pilot's responsibility to ensure FAA currency. It is possible to be IFR current within DOI policy and not be current in accordance with 14 CFR 61.

2. The IFR flight evaluation is conducted in accordance with the minimum performance standards established in the appropriate FAA Instrument Rating PTS, Instrument Proficiency Check.

D. From 351 DM 3.5 C (2)(c): "Flight evaluations completed in the calendar month before or after the calendar month in which they were required are considered as completed in the calendar month in which they were required."

1. This is the "evaluation window" provision.
2. The evaluation window is the pre-expiration month, base/expiration month and the grace month.
3. The calendar month an evaluation is given becomes the "Expiration Month" for that evaluation. The DM refers to this as the "required" month. For clarification, the terms expiration, due and required mean the same and are used interchangeably.
4. The calendar month immediately after the expiration date (the grace month) is an additional month that an evaluation is considered valid even though it is after the expiration date for the flight evaluation.
5. When a flight evaluation is given on any day within the "evaluation window" the expiration month does not change.
6. When a flight evaluation is given outside the "evaluation window", the expiration month for that flight evaluation must be reset. The calendar month the evaluation was given becomes the new expiration month.

E. From 351 DM 3.5 C (4)(b): "An initial flight evaluation is required in each category and class aircraft."

1. A DOI initial flight evaluation is required in each make and model of aircraft.

2. With documented differences training, the initial flight evaluation for another aircraft in the same grouping (OPM-23) may be waived at the Pilot Inspector's discretion. Training must be documented in the pilot's log book or on OAS Forms 50/51 as appropriate.

3. When applicable, an initial IFR flight evaluation is required in each category and class of aircraft.

4. Prior to operating a technically advanced aircraft IFR, a pilot must take an initial IFR flight evaluation in an aircraft with that specific electronic flight instrument display.

5. An initial flight evaluation is required for each configuration.

   a. Differences training is required when applying a specific configuration to an additional aircraft; i.e., if a PIC is qualified in a Cessna 206 on wheels and a Super Cub on wheels, skis and floats; differences training is required prior to operating a Cessna 206 on floats. At the Pilot Inspector's discretion, a differences flight evaluation may also be required.

   b. Differences training is required for a straight skis to retractable wheel skis transition and a differences flight evaluation may be required at the Pilot Inspector's discretion.

   c. In applying this discretion, the Pilot Inspector should consider the pilot's time in the particular category/make/model/series/configuration, recency of experience and the recommendation of the pilot/s instructor or mentor.

F. <u>From 351 DM 3.5 C (5)(b)(ii):</u> For all other airplanes, the annual flight evaluation must be accomplished in the most complex aircraft in class, every other year.

<u>From 351 DM 3.5 C (5)(b)(iii):</u> Pilots flying aircraft on skis shall have a ski configuration evaluation ride each 24 calendar months.

<u>From OPM-22, Appendix A 3.A:</u> DOI pilots operating aircraft in multiple configurations will alternate flight evaluations between configurations, e.g., year one - wheel skis, year two – floats.

1. PICs must pass an annual flight evaluation in each category of aircraft every 12 calendar months.
2. PICs operating turbine powered aircraft or an aircraft that requires a type rating must pass an annual flight evaluation in make and model (and series for helicopters) within the previous 12 calendar months.
3. PICs operating multiengine airplanes must pass a flight evaluation in a multiengine airplane within the previous 12 calendar months.
4. PICs operating an airplane on amphibious floats must pass a flight evaluation in an amphibious float equipped airplane within the previous 12 months.
5. PICs operating an airplane on skis must pass a flight evaluation in an airplane on skis within the previous 24 calendar months.
6. PICs operating an airplane on floats must pass a flight evaluation in an airplane on floats within the previous 24 calendar months.
7. PICs operating an airplane on wheels must pass a flight evaluation in an airplane on wheels within the previous 24 calendar months.
8. PICs operating single engine airplanes must pass a flight evaluation in a single engine airplane within the previous 24 calendar months.
9. PICs operating airplanes with retractable landing gear must pass a flight evaluation in an airplane with retractable landing gear within the previous 24 calendar months.
10. PICs operating an airplane on conventional landing gear must pass a flight evaluation in an airplane on conventional landing gear within the previous 24 calendar months.

Note: This list does not include any special use activities.

G. <u>From 351 DM 3.5 C(5)(c)(i):</u> If a pilot is conducting IFR operations in different category aircraft, flight evaluations shall be given in each category and class in rotation, but not more than one flight evaluation during each 6-month period is required.

1. After the initial IFR qualifications are met for each category and/or class as appropriate, only one IFR flight evaluation is required every six months, with limitations (see 351 DM 3.5 C(5)(c)(ii-iii).
2. A PIC that operates only one type of aircraft IFR must take their IFR flight evaluation in that aircraft.
3. A PIC that operates multiple types of aircraft IFR must rotate through each type of aircraft for their IFR flight evaluation.

NOTE: An FAA Instrument Proficiency Check conducted in accordance with 14 CFR 61.57(d) meets the requirements of a DOI IFR flight evaluation only when given by a qualified and approved OAS pilot inspector, approved bureau pilot inspector with an instrument instructor rating or a FAA Operations Aviation Safety Inspector. A DOI IFR flight evaluation does not meet the requirements of an FAA IPC unless the pilot inspector agrees before the flight evaluation that a FAA IPC will be conducted in accordance with 14 CFR 61.57(d) and an appropriate logbook endorsement is given upon completion of the IPC.

H. From OPM-22 Appendix B, paragraph C.2. Obtain 30 continuing educations units (CEU) of aviation-related training in previous thirteen months prior to a scheduled annual flight evaluation.

1. OPM-22 compliance will be evaluated in conjunction with a pilot's annual flight evaluation associated with that pilot's base month.
2. Under normal circumstances OPM-22 compliance is checked once every twelve months.

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