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CFItoCFI

ASI'S NEWSLETTER FOR THE SERIOUS FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR

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QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, SUBMISSION?

Send a note to CFINEWSLETTER@AOPA.ORG.
Thanks!

BROWSE THE PREVIOUS ISSUE:

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WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

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CFI NOTES >>>

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5 COMMON

PAPERWORK HICCUPS

FOR FAA PRACTICAL TESTS

BY JASON BLAIR

PAPERWORK ERRORS BECOME A STOPPING (BEFORE EVEN STARTING) POINT FOR ALL TOO MANY PRACTICAL TESTS.

It's frustrating for all involved because the applicant, the designated pilot examiner (DPE), and the instructor all planned on making a test happen at a scheduled time and at a scheduled location. This is even more frustrating when those errors cannot be resolved quickly and result in wasted time for the DPE, inability to complete a test for an applicant, and potentially wasted aircraft utilization time.

Even more frustrating, most of these are highly avoidable errors with a little extra diligence on the part of the applicant and instructor preparing an applicant for the test. It comes down to doing some detail-oriented review of all the paperwork.

I am going to lump the first three common paperwork errors into the regular path of things that are incorrect in the **FAA's Integrated Airman Certification and Rating Application (IACRA)** that frequently cause hiccups.

THE MOST COMMON MISTAKE IS NOT SPELLING THE NAME OUT FULLY, OR NOT INCLUDING A MIDDLE NAME, OR HAVING A PRE-MARRIAGE LAST NAME ON ONE CERTIFICATE AND POST-MARRIAGE OR HYPHENATED LAST NAME ON A SUBSEQUENT APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE/RATING.

COMMON IACRA ERRORS

The following are the most common things I regularly see as "errors" in the data entry portion of the IACRA application for certificates/ratings. Many of these can be corrected by returning the application to the applicant, making adjustments, and resubmitting, but in some cases, they require additional input—sometimes even from an FAA office—before a test can go forward.

NAME MISMATCHES

The best practice for an applicant is to fully spell out their first, middle, and last name if they have all three as it appears on a government-issued qualifying form of ID. Most commonly, applicants use a passport or a U.S. state-issued driver's license or state ID.

This is most commonly a stopping point when mismatches result. For example, if an applicant has a student pilot certificate with just their first and last name, but a photo ID that has the first, middle, and last name, and a medical certificate that has first, middle, and last name with a "Jr" suffix after it, and potentially a knowledge test with a first name, only middle initial, and full last name on it, the qualifying phase for a test is likely stopped. I know this sounds extreme, but it happened a few weeks ago to me.

The most common mistake is not spelling the name out fully, or not including a middle name, or having a pre-marriage last name on one certificate and post-marriage or hyphenated last name on a subsequent application for a certificate/rating. If these are already on record on the

applicant's pilot certificate, to change them will require an actual official "change of name" by the FAA. This cannot be done at the time of a practical test in nearly all cases, and must be done by an actual FAA inspector at an office. It will mean the test is not going forward if there is a non-reconcilable name mismatch, and it frequently results in more significant delay.

Get those name fields matching and check this ahead of the scheduled testing event to avoid these hiccups.

HEIGHT MISMATCH

The FAA lists height in inches. Many of us refer to height in common nomenclature in "feet and inches," such as 5' 11" tall. Or, the most common mistake, 6' 0" that regularly gets listed as 60 inches in the height field in IACRA. This should be listed as 72 inches.

Even just deviation from previously listed heights will result in a potential returned application package. If an applicant's last pilot certificate listed their height as 74 inches, but the new one lists it as 68 inches (four inches shorter), and the DPE doesn't catch it, it will result in the application being returned. For those that want more detail, the FAA officially allows heights to vary only up to two inches from application to application without additional justification.

MISSING OR INCORRECT FLIGHT TIMES

The experience matrix of flight time on the 8710 application form is there to allow an examiner to help qualify an applicant as having met the appropriate experience requirements for a particular certificate or rating for which a test will be given. Common problems: The flight times don't meet the minimums, flight times don't match what the applicant is demonstrating in his or her pilot logbook (digital or paper), or flight times are entered into incorrect columns and data boxes.

knowledge test with you will likely result in a need to reschedule the practical test.

NO ENDORSEMENT FOR AREAS FOUND DEFICIENT ON KNOWLEDGE TESTS

A CFI is required to "review the areas found deficient on an airman's knowledge test" prior to him or her being "qualified" for the practical test a DPE will give. This is a commonly forgotten endorsement.

Another common problem with this is that signing the bottom of the knowledge test doesn't meet the requirement. Some CFIs think it does, but the endorsement printed on the bottom of an airman knowledge test is there for a "retest" if they didn't pass on the previous try, not as a way to reconcile the areas that were wrong on a passing effort.

AC 61.65(H) has the appropriate endorsement in "Appendix A: Sample Endorsements"—it is "endorsement A2 - Review of deficiencies identified on airman knowledge test: § 61.39(a)(6) (iii) as required."

Things can get a little confusing, especially when working with different types of flight simulators, but making sure an applicant has correctly represented their flight time is critical to a DPE's ability to qualify their eligibility for the test.

Doing this correctly starts with legible and well-logged flight times in the pilot's logbook and training records. Do this from the beginning and getting this time correct in the IACRA application will go much easier.

MISSING KNOWLEDGE TEST

It is still required to show up at a practical test (for the ones that require knowledge tests) with a copy of that knowledge test. Since January 2020, it is no longer required that the copy have the "raised seal" but—and even though you may have it associated in IACRA—it is still required that the physical copy of the knowledge test be seen by the DPE on a practical test.

So bring it with you.

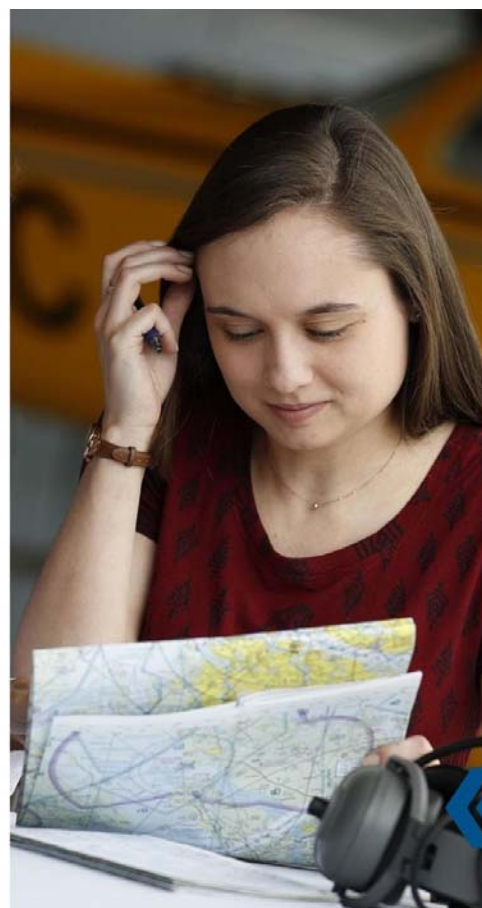
But what if I lost it?

Well, the good news is that since January 2020, knowledge tests can more easily be replaced via an online request form. The bad news is that if you haven't done this prior to the scheduled test, not having a copy of the

CFI IS REQUIRED TO "REVIEW THE AREAS FOUND DEFICIENT ON AN AIRMAN'S KNOWLEDGE TEST" PRIOR TO HIM OR HER BEING "QUALIFIED" FOR THE PRACTICAL TEST A DPE WILL GIVE. THIS IS A COMMONLY FORGOTTEN ENDORSEMENT.

We all make mistakes, but some of them happen more often than others. I bring these points up for your reading pleasure to help you know some of the most common ones that DPEs see on practical tests that at a minimum result in frustration and delay, and in some cases they result in non-continuation of a practical test that was scheduled. Attention to detail goes a long way in ensuring that applicants are able to move forward with the actual conduct of a practical test as scheduled.

***Jason Blair** is an active single and multiengine instructor and FAA designated pilot examiner with 4,900 hours total time and 2,850 hours instruction given. As examiner, he has issued more than 800 pilot certificates. He writes for multiple aviation publications and actively works within the general aviation industry. Email: jason.blair@aopa.org*



EVEN JUST DEVIATION FROM PREVIOUSLY LISTED HEIGHTS WILL RESULT IN A POTENTIAL RETURNED APPLICATION PACKAGE



My AOPA benefits made it possible to achieve my dreams of becoming a pilot!"

Nick Beatty
AOPA Web Team Lead
Member since 2017
BRI, October 2020



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Checkride CHECKLIST

BY ASI STAFF

DPE ANSWERS FOR STUDENTS AND CFIS

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The following is a compilation of questions from CFIs, students, and checkride applicants answered by designated pilot examiners. This forum intends to provide a healthy and helpful discussion platform for CFIs and applicants who are preparing for their checkrides' oral and practical test portions. It may also serve to help enhance the applicants' checkride experiences and promote continued learning. Email cfinewsletter@aopa.org to share your questions.

Q WHEN SHOULD AN APPLICANT AND THEIR CFI SCHEDULE THE APPLICANT'S CHECKRIDE?

A Most examiners will want an applicant to be signed off and ready with all their training and prerequisite flight experience or knowledge tests completed. It is perfectly acceptable to many DPEs to get in touch a little ahead of time and tentatively schedule a time as long as you give them notice and stay in touch if for any reason you won't be ready at the scheduled time. Many DPEs will hold a scheduled time for you with some pre-coordination, especially in areas where testing backups are present due to demand.

Q HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT SLIPS ON FINAL—MAYBE AGGRESSIVE FOR A STEEPER LANDING?

A That depends. On some tests, demonstration of slips is part of the skills to be tested. This may be done at different phases of flight, but it may in fact be a demonstratable item that will be requested. When specifically conducted on a final approach, slips may be used for their intended purpose. One word of warning would be to make sure they are being conducted in accordance with aircraft limitations. Some aircraft prohibit flaps with certain flap settings and many times applicants will find themselves high on an approach and at the last minute decide a slip will save them. When they do this outside of prescribed limitations for the aircraft, it is a failure generating moment.

checkride CHECKLIST

Q WHAT PROBLEMS DO EXAMINERS SEE WITH INSTRUMENT APPLICANTS, AND WHY ARE THESE GETTING PAST CFIs?

A Too often, instrument applicants have only flown the approaches at their home base. So, they may be fine interpreting and explaining those procedures, but they may not have clearly developed the skills of how to “read all approaches.” This is many times exemplified through use of modern flight bag technology where examiners can pick any approach in the U.S. and ask the applicant to brief them on it. This means the applicant has to demonstrate he or she has the skill to interpret an unfamiliar plate and be able to decide—based on the aircraft’s avionics—if that approach can be flown in his or her aircraft. Problems like this are getting past CFIs who are not focusing on a broader, less localized, approach to training their candidates.

Q MY HANGAR MATE HAS AN OLD CESSNA 172 WITHOUT VORS. CAN THIS AIRCRAFT BE USED FOR HIS PRIVATE PILOT CHECKRIDE?

A Yes! While the private pilot test does require demonstration of “radio navigation,” guidance from the FAA within the past few years has allowed this to be accomplished with non-permanently mounted electronic navigation equipment. This could be a portable GPS, an iPad with position monitoring through GPS signal, or other means. While it may be less conventional, it is certainly allowed.

Q ARE ALL EXAMINERS CFI’S? CAN YOU BE A DPE WITHOUT BEING A CFI?

A Yes, DPEs need to be flight instructors. Actually, to remain a DPE they must have an active CFI certificate, stay active with minimum PIC flight requirements themselves, and in many cases be actively providing instruction to students of their own when not conducting practical tests. You can learn more about the specific FAA requirements for examiners **here**.

PEARLS OF WISDOM FOR APPLICANTS:

- Relax, breathe, and fly the airplane
- Have an airworthy aircraft—know if something is not working if it’s okay to fly
- Own your checkride—you’re the pilot in command
- Be in charge, be confident in yourself, be prepared

HOW ABOUT YOU?

DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION YOU’D LIKE TO ASK A DPE? EMAIL CFInewsletter@aopa.org TO POST YOUR QUESTION.