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ASI'S NEWSLETTER FOR THE SERIOUS FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR

THE MANEUVER CHECKLIST CONCEPT

USE IT ON CHECKRIDES AND IN TRAINING BY JASON BLAIR



AS PILOTS, WE USE CHECKLISTS FOR LOTS OF THINGS. And using one essential tool—a maneuver checklist—greatly enhances the training process. Using a specific maneuver checklist is invaluable for pilots during a checkride and for certificated flight instructors during training sessions. But few do so.

There is nothing saying you can't use a maneuver checklist; it is an excellent idea to do so you don't mess up the maneuver. Especially on practical tests!

ENHANCED SAFETY AND STANDARDIZATION

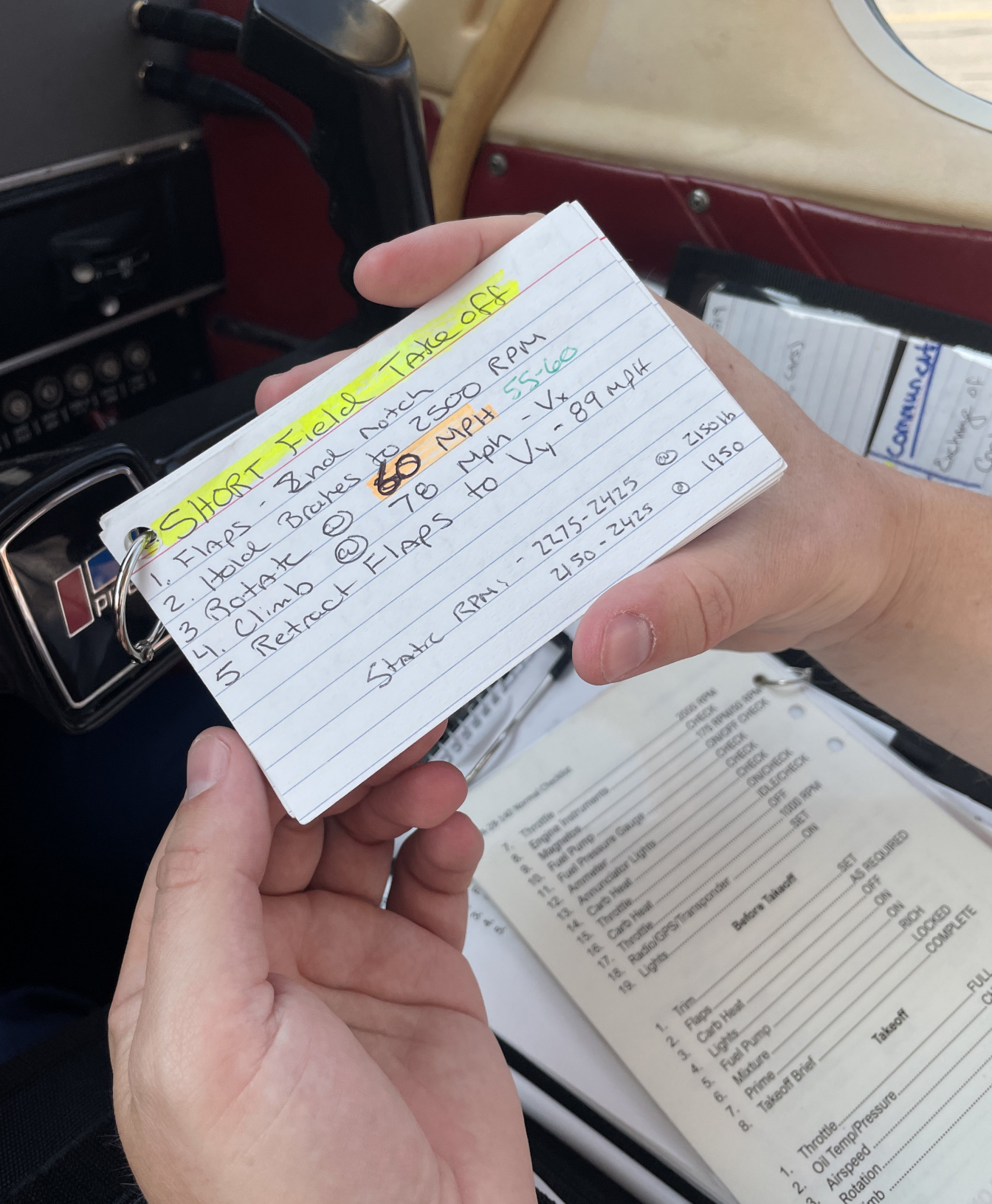
Effective flight training and checkrides play a pivotal role in ensuring safe and proficient pilots take to the skies. When pilots use a checklist performing maneuvers, several things enhance the safety and standardization of the maneuvers conducted—procedural compliance,

consistency, and risk mitigation. Each of these makes sure that the maneuver will be completed safely and within standards—typically the airman certification or practical test standards.

USING A SPECIFIC MANEUVER CHECKLIST IS INVALUABLE FOR PILOTS DURING A CHECKRIDE AND FOR CERTIFICATED FLIGHT INSTRUCTORS DURING TRAINING SESSIONS. BUT FEW DO SO.

Procedural compliance—By following a maneuver checklist, pilots are more likely to comply with established procedures guidance. This is obviously particularly important during checkrides where adherence to proper procedures is closely evaluated and may result in a disapproval if not done correctly. But it also applies to learners during practice or to CFIs teaching the maneuvers. Practice done correctly each time grooves the maneuver and results in less probability that a deviation from the standard will result when it is done on a test or in real-life flying; practice (correctly) makes permanent, imperfect practice makes imperfect performance.

Consistency—To that point, a maneuver checklist provides a standardized and consistent approach to conducting a flight maneuver. It ensures that pilots consistently perform each maneuver in a structured and methodical manner, reducing the risk of errors or omissions during critical flight



operations or testing. The checklist here isn't a "do" list, but a quick review of the flow of a maneuver to make sure the pilot flying a maneuver isn't missing something in setting up or conducting the activity.

Risk mitigation—Checkrides and training sessions are opportunities to identify and mitigate potential safety risks. The use of a maneuver checklist allows CFIs to systematically assess and correct any deviations or errors the pilot makes, thereby improving overall safety during flight operations. Missing something such as a minimum safe-recovery altitude or clearing the area can reduce the safety of the maneuver to be conducted. A quick review of a maneuver checklist can help jog the pilot's memory of all the steps and help avoid this safety risk.

PRACTICE DONE CORRECTLY EACH TIME GROOVES THE MANEUVER AND RESULTS IN LESS PROBABILITY THAT A DEVIATION FROM THE STANDARD WILL RESULT WHEN IT IS DONE ON A TEST OR IN REAL-LIFE FLYING; PRACTICE (CORRECTLY) MAKES PERMANENT, IMPERFECT PRACTICE MAKES IMPERFECT PERFORMANCE.

For example, after an accelerated stall demonstration on commercial and CFI-level practical tests, many candidates are issued disapprovals for failing to remember that while a power-on stall in a single-engine aircraft requires recovery at or above 1,500 feet agl, the accelerated stall requires recovery at or above 3,000 feet agl. Failing to properly set up the maneuver reduces safety, doesn't meet standards, and could be avoided by a quick review of the maneuver checklist that calls out a minimum setup altitude and reminds the pilot of this before performing the maneuver.



IMPROVED PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

As a CFI teaching maneuvers, or a pilot practicing maneuvers on your own, using a maneuver checklist can enhance your ability to critically evaluate the conduct of the maneuver.

FAILING TO PROPERLY SET UP THE MANEUVER REDUCES SAFETY, DOESN'T MEET STANDARDS, AND COULD BE AVOIDED BY A QUICK REVIEW OF THE MANEUVER CHECKLIST THAT CALLS OUT A MINIMUM SETUP ALTITUDE AND REMINDS THE PILOT OF THIS BEFORE PERFORMING THE MANEUVER.

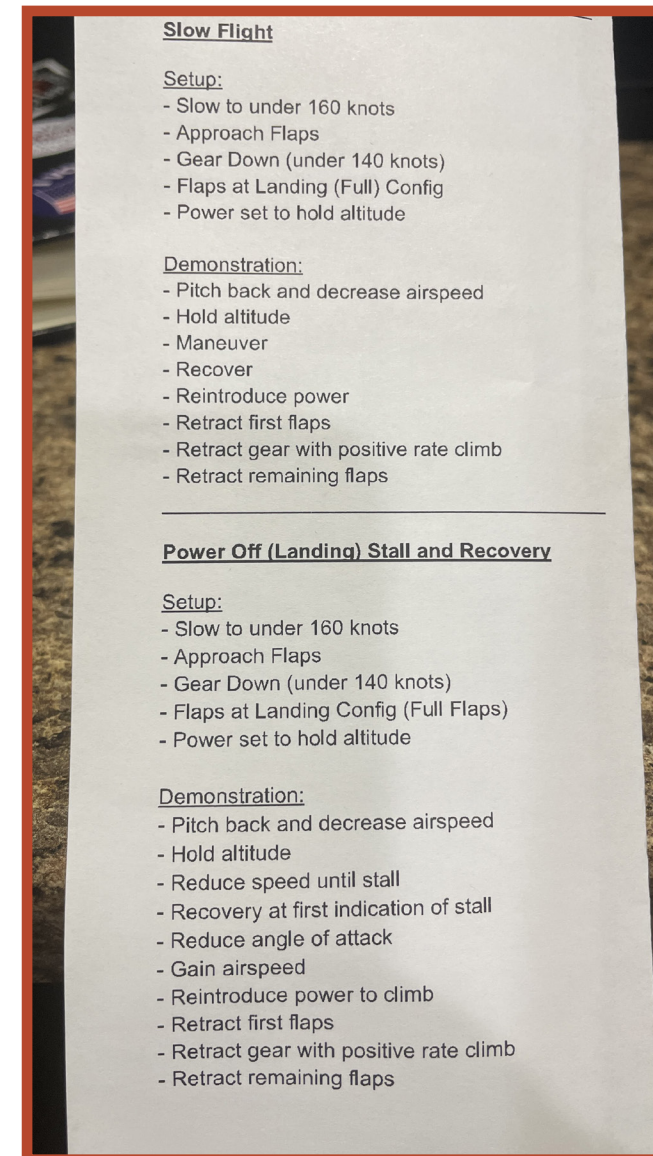
Comprehensive assessment—A maneuver checklist provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating a pilot's performance in established standards. It ensures that all essential elements of a particular maneuver are completed and observed, and it allows for a more accurate assessment of a pilot's proficiency and readiness for real-world flying scenarios.

Objective evaluation—A checklist provides an objective basis for evaluating a pilot's performance, reducing subjective biases that may influence the evaluation process. This allows for fair and consistent assessments across different checkride examiners or CFIs, promoting consistency and a higher standard of evaluation.

Identify areas for improvement—By using a maneuver checklist, CFIs can identify specific areas where a pilot may need further improvement. This enables targeted training and feedback, helping pilots focus on developing their weak areas and enhancing overall performance.

EFFICIENT TRAINING AND LEARNING

When CFIs use maneuver checklists they can help establish the learning goals for each lesson. CFIs and their students can review them ahead of





time, go over what will be done and to what standards, and have a clear understanding of what will happen once they go flying. This increases the overall structure and effectiveness of training (and testing).

GOOD CFIS MIGHT INTRODUCE MANEUVERS WITH A LEARNER USING THE CHECKLISTS, PRACTICE THE MANEUVERS A FEW TIMES, THEN SEND THEIR STUDENTS OUT TO PRACTICE THEM ON THEIR OWN USING THE SAME CHECKLISTS.

Structured training—A maneuver checklist provides a structured framework for CFIs to organize and deliver training sessions. It ensures that all necessary maneuvers are covered, reducing the chances of omitting crucial aspects of flight training and ensuring a comprehensive learning experience for the pilot.

Self-study and preparation—Finally, a maneuver checklist can be used as a tool that allows pilots to engage in self-study and prepare for training sessions more effectively. By reviewing the checklists beforehand, pilots can familiarize themselves with the required maneuvers and associated procedures, making training sessions more efficient and productive.

Good CFIs might introduce maneuvers with a learner using the checklists, practice the maneuvers a few times, then send their students out to practice them on their own using the same checklists. They then can come back and evaluate the student's learning progress using the checklists as the learner conducts the maneuvers on their own without the prompting of the instructor. In the final stage, a checkride candidate might use those same checklists during their practical test efforts while a designated pilot examiner is



on board to demonstrate their abilities to meet airman certification or practical test standards.

While maneuver checklists should never become “crutches” to understand the flow and process of a maneuver, they can become good prompts to ensure a pilot isn’t missing something along the way. Like all our checklists, they aren’t to be treated as mechanical “do” lists, but as “checklists” to make sure we don’t miss things that might cause us to conduct a maneuver out of standard or compromise safety.

In my years as a designated pilot examiner, I can only remember very few applicants who took advantage of making their own or having some sort of produced maneuver checklists with them on their tests. There is nothing prohibiting them, and honestly, I can’t imagine a good CFI who wouldn’t want something like this to help them teach consistently. No one can memorize everything. Use tools to help your teaching, learning, and testing be more consistent and effective. One of those tools too few people use is the maneuver checklist concept.

Jason Blair is an active single and multiengine instructor and an FAA designated pilot examiner with more than 6,000 hours total time, 3,000 hours of instruction given, and 3000 hours in aircraft as a DPE. As examiner, he has issued more than 2,000 pilot certificates. He has worked for and continues to work with multiple aviation associations focusing on pilot training and testing. His experience as a pilot and instructor spans nearly 20 years and includes more than 100 makes and models of aircraft flown. Jason Blair has published works in many aviation publications with a focus on training and safety.

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