# Crew Pairing Policy and Procedures

Training centers often provide services to air operators which are required to meet requirements of particular operating rules (i.e., 14 CFR parts 91 Subpart K and 135.) Under these rules, training programs include checklists, callouts, profiles, approach procedures, and other features that are specifically approved for an air operator by its assigned POI. Occasionally an operator may not be able to assign a complete crew for their training/checking/testing activities at part 142 training centers. When this situation occurs, the training center may provide other qualified crewmembers, subject to the following criteria.

The FAA promotes the crew concept in air carrier training and checking to ensure that crew coordination and other flight management issues are adequately addressed. Flight training must address the performance of duties as pilot flying (PF) and pilot not flying (PNF) as described in the air operator's approved procedures. To meet both of these seat-dependent training needs, each required cockpit crew position must be occupied by a qualified crewmember as outlined below.

It is desirable that each flight training session be scheduled so that two pilots from the same company or air operator may be trained during a single flight training session. The preferred crew pairing is a PIC and a SIC. Other acceptable crew pairings are two PICs or two SICs. Each pilot receiving training should have completed the appropriate aircraft ground training, including basic indoctrination, prior to beginning the flight training segment.

A. **Permissible crew pairings for part 135**—Part 135 air carriers often operate with small pilot rosters or with pilots who are widely dispersed. This policy allows crew pairings for flight training/checking/testing in a simulator at a training center using an appropriate crewmember. An appropriate crewmember must be one of the following:

1. One of the air carrier's line qualified pilots, or

2. A contract flight instructor (airplane or simulator) or a contract check airman (airplane or simulator) who is authorized to serve in that air carrier's training program or in an air carrier training program that is essentially similar.

   **NOTE: Training programs may be viewed as essentially similar when they include the same curriculum, the same checklists, and the same callouts and include cockpit configurations, operational procedures, and flight manuals which are compatible in the judgment of the appropriate POI.**

3. A part 135 air carrier pilot being trained in a training program which is FAA-approved for another part 135 air carrier, but which is otherwise essentially similar. The following conditions apply:

   - Each air carrier pilot must be trained in accordance with the training program approved by the POI of his/her own air carrier.

- Two pilots training for operations with different carriers may be paired provided their respective training programs are essentially similar. Minimum Equipment Lists (MEL), Operations/Management Specifications (OpSpec/MSpec), and other features specific to each air carrier's operations must be addressed during flight training. When the training curricula are not essentially similar, pilots may not be paired; similarly, when operational differences between carriers are too pronounced or too numerous, at the discretion of the appropriate POI, pilots may not be paired.

- When only one pilot is receiving flight training, the other pilot seat must be occupied by a person who is line qualified or line familiar in the specified duty position (see AC 120-35, as amended, for definition of terms), unless the flight training is being conducted for single pilot operations.

4. Pilots must have completed the operator's applicable ground training curriculum segments prior to starting the flight training curriculum segments.

B. **Pairing pilots in flight training and evaluation for operations under different parts—** When pilots from different operators are paired in training programs that are essentially similar, the operator-specific features (such as MELs and OpSpec/MSpec) of each operator must be addressed. Pilots in training for part 135 operations should not routinely be paired with pilots training for operations under part 91. These crew pairings should be avoided in favor of the pairings outlined in subparagraph (A) above. However, such crew pairings are permissible provided the following conditions are met:

1. The part 91 pilot must conform to the training program of the part 135 pilot in every important respect. Specifically, checklists, profiles, approach procedures and callouts must be those used in the training program of the part 135 pilot (not vice versa), and the part 91 pilot must understand and apply crew resource management (CRM) principles in accordance with the Air Transport Pilot Practical Test Standards.

2. Each certificated air operator's crewmember must complete the appropriate air operator's evaluation module. Part 135 pilots may support the part 91 pilot's training activities as appropriate.

3. Part 91 pilots paired with an air operator crewmember must use the operator's approved curriculum. In these cases, the TCPM must either concur with the part 91 pilot's use of the air operator's curriculum to complete required training and currency, or approve a documented process submitted by the training center that ensures all requirements described herein are met. The training center should maintain records of such pairings in sufficient detail so as to allow FAA inspectors to easily determine compliance with the applicable regulation, operator's crew pairing procedures (if provided) and these requirements.

4. The part 91 pilot must have received differences training in the features of the part 135 training curriculum that distinguishes it from the part 91 training curriculum.

That training should also include the operator's OpSpecs and operational control procedures.

> **NOTE: In crew pairings involving pilots of different part 135 operators or pilots operating under different operating rules (part 135 and part 91) POIs and TCPMs must be especially vigilant. The part 135 operator's training program must not be distorted or diminished in order to accommodate dissimilar training needs. If the integrity of the air carrier training program cannot be upheld the crew pairing must not be permitted.**

C. **Crew Pairing for Part 142 Flight Training/Checking/Testing**—Training centers are required to comply with 142.65(b) which specifies that when flight testing, flight checking, or line operational simulation is being conducted, each required crewmember position must be occupied by either a crewmember qualified in the aircraft category, class, and type, or a student enrolled in the same specific course.

The intent of this rule is to ensure that the pilot who is being tested or checked is assisted by a PNF who is competent and proficient at performing those duties. When students are enrolled in courses with different identifiers or names, they may therefore still be paired together in a simulator for testing, checking or LOS activities provided the courses are essentially similar.

> **NOTE: Training programs may be viewed as essentially similar when they include the same curriculum, the same checklists, and the same callouts and include cockpit configurations, operational procedures, and flight manuals which are compatible in the judgment of the TCPM and/or the appropriate POI.**

> **NOTE: In crew pairings involving pilots operating under different operating rules (e.g., part 142 and JAA) TCPMs must be especially vigilant. The part 142 approved training program must not be distorted or diminished in order to accommodate dissimilar training needs. If the integrity of the part 142 training program cannot be maintained the crew pairing must not be permitted.**

Training centers should develop a written crew pairing policy for part 142 training and adhere to this policy. Besides defining how the training center will comply with the intent of 61.65(b), this policy should include a requirement for English language proficiency (in accordance with AC 60-28 requirements for part 61 pilot certification) and a mechanism for a trainee to elevate a concern regarding an unsatisfactory pilot pairing to center management.