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FAA FIRC Facts

FAA FIRC Headlines:

- New FIRC AC On Track for 07.
- The New FIRC Philosophy.
- Business Aspects of Flight Instructing
- Some Push-Back on the TSA Module

Just a reminder:
Let us know if you want your FIRC listed on the FAA FIRC site. We'll be posting soon.



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New FIRC AC 61-83F On Track For '07

Hello, and welcome to this second issue of the quarterly **FAA FIRC Facts** newsletter.

The biggest news is still the new Advisory Circular. The rewrite is on track and is still planned for release late summer of 2007. The AC has, for all practical purposes, been completed and is now going through the review process.

Staff here at AFS-800 has been working with industry

providers throughout the process and the Agency has been receiving universal praise for the new direction that the FIRCs are going to take.

Even though the AC won't "hit the streets" until late summer, several industry providers have already taken the initiative and revised their Training Course Outlines (TCOs) to reflect this new direction.

Even though the AC is still not official, those who wish to move in that direction early can contact Greg French (gregory.french@faa.gov) to discuss how to go about it.

New and revised TCOs, that deviate from the old AC 61-83E to reflect the new goals on the horizon, will be reviewed and approved on a one-on-one basis by AFS-800.

The New FIRC Philosophy

The change in direction of the FIRC Advisory Circular guidance has been an evolutionary one, guided by a joint combination of the changing face of aviation and by the needs of the instructors in the field and the FIRC providers in industry. And that change in direction is fundamental.

In the past, the emphasis, indeed, the very philosophy of the FIRC, was that of a refresher of basic skills: To re-teach instructors that lift equals weight and to remind us of a fellow

named Bernoulli. This was both good and bad. Good, in that sometimes instructors need to be reminded of the basics. But the fact is, the bad far outweighed the good. That is, the FIRC is only 16 hours long. Yet, these last few years have witnessed more significant changes in aviation than the industry has seen in the past 70 years! Sport pilot, Technically Advanced Aircraft (TAA), FAA/Industry Training Standards (FITS), TSA, GPS, IACRA, just to name

a few. Where was the time to teach these new and important topics when the old AC *specifically* required that 13 of the 16 hours be spent on the Core/Special Emphasis topics that were, essentially, the basics?

The exciting new philosophy of the FIRC will parallel that of the doctors who attends a conference. They do so not to learn basic biology – they're expected to know that already – but instead to learn about the *(continued next page...)*

The New FIRC Philosophy (*continued*)

latest techniques and technologies in their fields.

So, rather than a rehash of what a flight instructor is reasonably *expected* to already know, the slant of the new-and-improved FIRCs will be to emphasize new and ever changing topics. This means more flexibility will be granted to the FIRC provider allowing them to decide what the most important topic of the day is and to decide for themselves how much, or how little, time to spend on it.

There will still be 15 core topics, but they will all be addressing contemporary issues and can be incorporated into their TCO however they think best. For example, some core topics can be combined into a single session and there will be no time constraints placed on those core topics, although a minimum of 30 minutes each is *recommended*, totaling only 7.5 hours. This new freedom will allow significantly more time to devote to topics that are more in

tune with what is happening in the field at that moment.

The idea here is that instructors will begin to look forward to each new FIRC as an opportunity to get up to speed on the “latest-and-greatest” of what’s happening in the world that has direct effect on their fields. Doctors all over the world voluntarily and eagerly attend conferences so that they can be more effective, and thus more profitable, in their fields. We want the same for the profession of flight instructing.



“Let’s face it: flight instructors are business persons, be they self-employed or work for a flight school...”



Business Aspects of Flight Instructing

Let’s face it: flight instructors are business persons, be they self-employed or work for a flight school. In fact, the pay structure at many flight schools amounts to little more than contracting, making even “employed” instructors, in actual fact, self-employed. Having a good understanding of the implications of that fact can help an instructor better plan his/her interactions

with clients, scheduling, tax structures, and more.

Flight instruction is, above all, a people-oriented service industry. Instructors need to understand that they are in the business of providing a service to a customer, and that better service means better business. And better business translates into more money, always a point of interest among

traditionally starving instructors.

The old AC explicitly prohibited the coverage of this topic. Opinions have since changed. *Business Aspects of Flight Instructing* is now allowed as an optional elective. We believe that an instructor who understands his/her financial role in the industry can make for a better instructor, so have at it!

TSA – A New Required Topic – Some Pushback

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has become a necessary fact of flight-training life. As a consequence of 9/11, the TSA has become involved in all aspects of aviation, including flight training, and new flight students are not likely to be aware of TSA’s involvement in their own training. This means they must rely on their instructor to steer them in

the appropriate direction. Flight instructors must be aware of what airman certificates the TSA is interested in and those that they are not. What the requirements are for citizenship documentation, records keeping, foreign student processing, and more. Not following the TSA guidelines properly can have serious consequences both for the student and for the flight instructor, and

TSA does not consider ignorance of the rules an excuse. Yet, we’ve gotten more instructor pushback on this topic than from any other. The argument has been: “we’re not law enforcement.” True, but, like it or not, the TSA is here to stay and we have to deal with it. It’s really not that hard, but it does require proper training and we at the FAA strongly feel that the FIRC is the appropriate venue to get that training.

