Overview of the Process

The certification process for part 121 applicants consists of a pre-application process and a series of four phases and three gates that must be successfully completed when progressing between phases.

Pre-Application Process

This part of the process is the most complex, demanding, and time consuming. Your objective during the pre-application process is to work with personnel at the Certificate Holding District Office (CHDO) to gather the required information and documentation necessary to prepare for the Application process.

Application Phases

- Phase 1: Application. This phase begins when an applicant submits a request to the CHDO for a formal application meeting.

- Phase 2: Design Assessment. The FAA reviews how well you design, document, and audit your safety-critical processes. These processes must comply with regulations and safety standards and allow you to manage the hazard related risk in your system.

- Phase 3: Performance Assessment. The FAA observes and monitors many types of applicant activities to confirm that your operating systems produce the intended results.

- Phase 4: Administrative functions. The FAA issues an Air Carrier or Operating Certificate and Operations Specifications when you have completed all requirements, phases and gates of the certification process

The certification process flow chart, Figure 10-8 in 8900.1 ([Volume 10, Chapter 1, Section 3](#)) provides an overview of the certification/application process. Simultaneous use of the flow chart and narrative discussion will assist you and the inspector in understanding the certification process. The chart is particularly useful in determining whether the "Schedule of Events" is reasonable in terms of sequence, timeliness, and inspector resource availability. It also provides a perspective on how a particular event affects other events and is an important reference for planning various activities during the certification/application process.

The following links provide additional information.

[FAA Order 8900.1](#) Flight Standards Information Management System (FSIMS)

Phases and Gates for Initial Certification (Figure 10-8) in [Volume 10, Chapter 1, Section 3](#)

Certification Process of Part 121 Air Carriers in [Volume 10, Chapter 6, Section 1](#)