



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Attention All FIRC Providers:

In an effort to improve and modernize the current flight training system, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is taking a critical look at the standards and guidelines used for the approval of Flight Instructor Refresher Clinics (FIRC). To this end, the FAA is soliciting stakeholder input on how best to improve the national FIRC program. Currently, FIRC providers adhere to the guidelines established in Advisory Circular (AC) 61-83E when developing their instructional programs. While this AC highlights many of the critical knowledge areas emphasized during flight training, it may overlook other training elements that are worthy of attention.

During the FIRC approval process, the FAA's Certification and Flight Training Branch, AFS-840, conducts a review to ensure each of the 15 core and special emphasis subjects are adequately covered. However, as the FAA looks to integrate system safety concepts into all levels of flight training, it is important to identify those subjects that continue to be relevant, as well as those that may no longer have the same degree of value. In cases of the latter, we may look to replace those topics with elements of greater significance to the instructor community. For example, FIRC providers may look at taking a more holistic approach to introducing risk management and aeronautical decision-making into every training subject. The possibilities are limitless, and the FAA is anxious to discuss possible improvements with FIRC providers. Those who wish to participate in this process may do so by forwarding their contact information to Mike Brown at michael.w.brown@faa.gov.

The FAA has already begun to help modernize the existing FIRC system by developing new, value-added resources for educators. These include a FAA/Industry Training Standards (FITS) training module and a System Safety Course Developers' Guide. Once completed, the FAA will allow FIRC providers to cover these subjects in lieu of existing emphasis items, such as human factors, instructor professionalism, and flight safety. Following a requisite transition period, the FITS training module and System safety course developers guide will become a required element of all FIRC programs.

As you know, FIRCs are the renewal method of choice for many flight instructors. These programs offer a convenient, cost effective method of complying with the requirements outlined in 14 CFR section 61.197. For this reason, the FAA recognizes the valuable role FIRC providers play in the quality and continuing education of the flight instructor community. The FAA is anxious to leverage this expertise as it looks to improve the existing FIRC guidelines. Equally important, the FAA

would like to coordinate any future changes with effected stakeholders. Again, we share a common goal- to provide the best possible recurrent training to our cadre of flight instructors. Only by ensuring our instructors have the best resources possible can we realize true safety benefits throughout the general aviation community.

All FIRC providers are encouraged to participate in this important process. Comments and questions may be directed toward Mike Brown, AFS-840, at (202) 267-7653. The FAA asks that you provide your input no later than September 17, 2004.

Sincerely,

John M. Wensel
Manager, Certification and Flight
Training Branch

cc: AFS-840
AFS-800