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# FAA FIRC Facts

FAA AFS-810 Flight Standards Certification and General Aviation Operations  
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## FAA FIRC Headlines:

- *Flight Reviews - An Important Skill*
- *FIRC Core Topics to Change*
- *Line Up And Wait ("Huh?")*
- *Runway Crossing Clearance Changes Coming Soon*
- *New "Easy Wings" Now At a Computer Near You!*

**Just a reminder: – be sure to check the FIRC website regularly (say, once a month or so). It's the first place where new FIRC-related info will be posted.**



## Flight Reviews – A Lost Art? Or a Skill Yet to Learn.

How many of us have, during our flying careers, gone to some flight school to “get a BFR”? (And by the way, they haven’t been “Biennial Flight Review” for some time – they’re simply “Flight Reviews” now.)

It may have been a while for some of us, but tell me if this or a similar scenario is familiar: You show up at a flight school for your “BFR,” and “Bob” the CFI (my apologies to any Bobs out there) says “. . . sure – let’s do it – you wanna’ fly or talk first?” (Personal experience.) Hmmmm. Not a good sign! Worse, how about: “Hey Bob, you know me pretty well – how ‘bout just signing this thing off for me? We’ll get together when I have more time.” Yeah. That never happens.

The fact is the Flight Review is an awesome responsibility *and opportunity* on the part of the CFI. All too many pilots never encounter a flight instructor except for the every-two-year requirement established in 14 CFR part 61.56.

So, what does it take to give a truly good and useful flight review? Well, it sure doesn’t begin with “. . . you wanna’ fly or talk first?” It begins with understanding just what a flight review is and what it isn’t. It isn’t a test. You’ve heard that a thousand times. The CFI shouldn’t simply spend the time endlessly quizzing. What it is, is an opportunity to assess *and enhance* a pilot’s aviation skills.

How does the CFI do that in only an hour in the air and an hour on the ground? The first thing is *put the pilot at ease!* Reassure them that

they’re not being tested, and that the flight review is a joint effort between the two of them. Figure out what the pilot’s normal flying consists of. Then don’t do that. If the pilot says he only goes out on Saturdays and flies around the pattern doing touch and go’s, then he’s probably not too bad at it. The CFI should take a cursory look at that to be sure, but then have him go do something he doesn’t regularly do (but is within the expectations of his grade of certificate), like maybe short or soft field work. Or maybe some cross country flying, to include all of the prerequisite pre-flight stuff like weather and weight and balance. They don’t have to actually complete the whole flight. Just go part way. If the pilot doesn’t do this kind of flying often, it’s the CFI’s opportunity to offer some of their wisdom. Possibly even suggest that the pilot come back for some more detail work.

Does the pilot hold a commercial pilot certificate? An ATP? Do they fly commercially? These are all questions that should shape the course of the review. This doesn’t mean a lot of homework either. The CFI should sit down with the pilot and explore these questions as part of the hour of ground instruction. The answers should guide the discussion, which should really be a kind of disguised instruction from start to finish. Each question answered should offer an opportunity to “feed” the pilot another piece of new knowledge. Take a few minutes to flip through

the appropriate PTS with the pilot and agree on some maneuvers that he might like to get a bit better at (*not tested at*). Before he knows it, he’ll have painlessly completed the ground portion, learned something from the CFI, and the CFI will have formed an on-the-fly plan of action for the air work to follow.

That’s not to say the CFI should go in cold. The CFI should have a general plan of how to conduct a review and should take notes during the ground time. An excellent guide with questions and checklists will be the upcoming newly revised flight review circular AC 61-98B coming soon (how many CFIs even know that that AC exists?). There’s also the FAA’s very useful “Conducting An Effective Flight Review” document available at: [http://www.faa.gov/pilots/training/media/flight\\_review.pdf](http://www.faa.gov/pilots/training/media/flight_review.pdf)

The bottom line is, is the pilot safe for the kind of flying he or she does? Has the CFI encouraged the pilot to perhaps push their knowledge and skill just a bit farther? *Did the CFI make it fun or interesting for the pilot so that they leave with a positive feeling about their interaction?*

Too many CFIs don’t recognize this opportunity to enhance safety and send that person home a better pilot. The CFI can only do so much in a couple of hours, but he or she *can* have a positive effect. It’s your job as the “trainer of trainers” to see to it that the CFIs have these tools and more when it comes to the flight review.

## Changes Coming to the Core Topics



**“What CFI topics do you think are the most universally important and current?...”**

As some great unknown sage once said: “times they be a’changin’” And so it goes with the FIRC core topics that the FAA feels are the most immediately important. So – what this means is the required core topics found in Appendix 1 of AC 61.83F are going to be updated.

But don’t worry! Yes, it may mean some work on your parts, but not as much as I know you’re fearing right now! So chill out a bit! Here’s where we’re going: Technically Advanced Aircraft, FAA/Industry Training Standards, and GPS, will be combined into a single module. You already have the material so if you aren’t already combining them (many of you are), it shouldn’t be too big a deal.

We are going to require modification to the Runway Incursion module. It will become Pilot Deviations, certainly to include RIs, but also to include airborne deviations such as altitude and heading excursions, and airspace violations.

We are going to be adding at

least one new module to the list. That will be *Conducting Effective Flight Reviews*, the topic of this edition’s lead article.

But before we do any of this, I want to hear from you. What CFI topics do *you* think are the most universally important and current? What message do you, as the “trainers of the trainers” want to get across to the CFI community at large? And that’s an important point. Every geographic region has at least one, if not more, locally important topics that are critical to CFIs operating in that area. A topic that’s critically important in western Montana or Idaho, for example, might not be quite as urgent to the CFI working in Kansas or Florida (guess what topic that might be).

Instead, we’re looking for those issues that would apply to all CFIs nationwide. For example, *Effective Teaching* is certainly a universal topic, as is how to avoid getting pinged by the TSA, along with others. But are we missing something? You tell me.

The revisions are not complete, and I’m not going to complete them until I hear from you. So think about it and get your ideas in to me so I can make it happen. We all want the same things – better, more effective and knowledgeable (and thereby, safer) CFIs. Here’s your chance to help guide official policy toward that end.

Also, once the new list of core topics is completed, no later than early fall, providers will *not* be required to update their existing TCOs until they’re up for renewal. Naturally, anyone who wants to amend their TCOs early will get a quick turnaround on their approval and we encourage you to do just that.

Remember my philosophy when it comes to FIRC providers: you folks are the experts at what you do. I ask only 3 things: Cover the core topics – somewhere; tell me what you’re going to do (and how you’ll do it); then *do* what you told me you’re going to do with consistency (oh yeah, and maintain the mandated minimum 16 hours of instruction – but that one’s out of my hands). The rest is up to you.

Now, that ‘tweren’t so bad, was it?

## “Line Up and Wait” is Coming to a Runway Near YOU!



We’ve all heard it a thousand times: “*Cessna one-two-three-four, taxi into position and hold, runway two-three left*” or something similar to it. We know what it means. It means get yourself out on the runway and get primed for air traffic to send you on your way in very short order.

Well, after September 30, 2010 (tentatively) you will never hear that phrase again. Instead, you’ll hear: “*Cessna one-two-three-four, line up and wait, runway two-three*

*left*” And, no, the proper read-back will most definitely not be “*huh?*”

The idea behind this upcoming change is to bring a bit of our U.S. phraseology into “harmony” with that used in the majority of other ICAO countries. That’s fine. But making sure that every pilot who flies out of a towered airport is up to speed on the new phraseology is going to become an important responsibility for CFIs if we want to avoid hearing the

dreaded “*huh?*” read-back.

After a year or so, it will become second nature to pilots just as the current phraseology is. But, until then, let’s be sure we start spreading the word in *every* interaction we have with pilots in our capacities as CFIs. Repetition is not a bad thing here. A pilot responding to a CFI’s entreaty with something like “*yeah, yeah, I already know that*” is a whole lot better than their responding to ATC with “*huh?*”

## FAA Issues Runway Crossing Clearance Changes



On a related and equally important note: Effective June 30, 2010, air traffic controllers will no longer use the term “taxi to” when authorizing aircraft to taxi to an assigned takeoff runway.

CFIs need to know to instruct their students that, with this change, controllers will be issuing explicit clearances to pilots crossing any runway (that’s *any* runway: active/inactive or closed) along the taxi route.

In addition, pilots crossing multiple runways must be past the first runway they are cleared to cross before con-

trollers can issue the next runway-crossing clearance.

An exception to the new rule will be at airports where taxi routes between runway centerlines are fewer than 1,000 feet apart. In this case, multiple runway crossings may be issued if approved by the FAA Terminal Services Director of Operations.

The elimination of the “taxi to” phrase will apply only to departing aircraft. Arriving aircraft will still hear the phrase “taxi to” when instructed to taxi to the gate or ramp. However, controllers in these situations still will

be required to issue specific crossing instructions for each runway encountered on the taxi route. Direct your CFI attendees to FAA Order N JO 7110.528, which can be found at:

<http://www.faa.gov/documentLibrary/media/Notice/N7110.528.pdf>.

This additional little “tidbit” will fit right in with your existing runway incursion / pilot deviation module so it shouldn’t affect your program. Just make sure that you get this very important word out to your attendees at your very next presentation.

**“This new *new* WINGS has eliminated credits and other confusing requirements from the last “new” WINGS of two years ago ...”**

## “Easy” WINGS Now Operational

Well, it’s finally happened – as promised: the new and improved “easy” WINGS Pilot Proficiency Program was released in March of this year, and it’s getting good reviews.

Good reviews I say? How about I let the number speak for themselves, such as: a 24 percent increase in participation in just two months. And you ain’t seen nuttin’ yet. How about nearly 300 percent increase in WINGS Phases earned since March? Now *that* puts even Al Gore’s “hockey-stick-shaped curve” to shame! And that should tell you something! Folks are glomming onto this new program.

This new *new* WINGS has eliminated credits and other confusing requirements from the last “new” WINGS of two years ago and now it’s easier

than ever to use. In fact, the participating pilot now doesn’t even have to use a computer at all if they’re determined not to. The CFI can take care of everything for them and s/he doesn’t even have to be an active participating member (although I can’t imagine why the CFI wouldn’t want to participate themselves – after all, they get credit that can actually apply to their CFI renewal and possibly even reduced insurance rates if they do).

Now, here’s my question to you, the trainer of the trainers: Have you updated your WINGS core topic content yet? If not, it’s time. Instructors NEED to know how to use the new system. It’s only a matter of time before a pilot will come to them asking for WINGS credit or validation, or to

participate in some WINGS flight training. The CFI must know what to tell the pilot and how to help him/her with the program (not that they’ll need much help, easy as the program is now), plus, they’re going to need to know how to validate their training. (Did you know that there’s a special “CFI Portal” in the program just for CFIs? Hint – the link is just under the top banner on all of the “Pilots” pages.) The fact is, no one who professes to be a professional in their field likes to answer a question they should know with “duuh. . . .” This is where you guys come in. Make sure that the CFIs out there know about the new *NEW* WINGS program and how to use it. Update your presentations to reflect all of the new operational paradigms and web pages. It should actually make your module shorter, since there’s simply less to teach them! Everyone wins!

