



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
Federal Aviation  
Administration

# Advisory Circular

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**Subject:** WINGS—Pilot Proficiency Program

**Date:** 2/16/11

**AC No:** AC 61-91J

**Initiated by:** AFS-800

**Change:**

**1. PURPOSE.** The objective of the WINGS—Pilot Proficiency Program is to reduce the number of accidents in General Aviation (GA) by assisting airmen to find educational opportunities designed to help them apply the principles of risk assessment and risk management (RM). When properly applied, these principles will help mitigate accident causal factors associated with common pilot errors, lack of proficiency, and faulty knowledge. The Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) purpose is to encourage the majority of GA pilots, through WINGS, to engage in ongoing, targeted flying tasks and learning activities keyed to identified risks and which are designed to mitigate those risks. The FAA continually collects and assesses its databases to identify the risks associated with GA flying and incorporates risk mitigation strategies into initial and ongoing pilot education.

**2. CANCELLATION.** This advisory circular (AC) cancels AC 61-91H, Pilot Proficiency Award Program, dated April 26, 1996. The FAA accepted applications for awards under the discontinued program through January 31, 2008.

**3. BACKGROUND.** To address accident causal factors associated with common pilot errors, lack of proficiency, and faulty knowledge, the FAA developed a voluntary pilot education and proficiency program (i.e., WINGS) and made it available via the Internet to all pilots at all certificate levels. The WINGS Program consists of learning activities and tasks selected to address the documented causal factors of aircraft accidents. Accomplishment of a phase of WINGS requires the participating pilot to demonstrate proficiency in specified knowledge and skill tasks. The FAA encourages pilots to participate in ongoing aviation educational learning and skill-building events with an instructor. The WINGS Program provides the opportunity, the structure, and the recognition for pilots to continue their aviation education. This ongoing effort fosters new learning, review, and flight proficiency in the areas of operation found in current practical test standards (PTS). The FAA further encourages pilots to maintain proficiency by using the WINGS Program. To this end, the WINGS Program has three levels of participation: Basic WINGS, Advanced WINGS, and Master WINGS. Within each level, a pilot may earn phases of WINGS as explained below and at [www.FAASafety.gov](http://www.FAASafety.gov).

**4. DISCUSSION.** Accident data point to specific areas of pilot operations where knowledge, skill, or decisionmaking ability are causal factors in the accidents or incidents. Aviation experts have identified hazards associated with GA flying. Accident and incident data indicate the most common situations where hazards become risks. The WINGS Program targets flying situations and knowledge areas where unmitigated risk is most likely to result in an accident. Prior to the implementation of this new WINGS Program, a review of all aircraft accidents in the

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United States over a 2-year period was conducted. This review resulted in a list of accident causal factors, by aircraft category and class, which appeared most often in accident reports. The activities and tasks required for completion of a phase of WINGS address these causal factors. For example, poor aeronautical decisionmaking was cited by accident investigators as a primary accident causal factor in many accidents. Hence, the WINGS Program requires successful completion of an activity on the subject of aeronautical decisionmaking as one of the requirements for a phase of WINGS. Likewise, other accident causal factors cited in reports, such as performance and limitations, preflight planning, positive aircraft control, basic flying skills, and takeoffs and landings are required for completion of a phase of WINGS. For the purposes of the WINGS Program, these accident causal factors are conveniently arranged in three knowledge and flight areas as described on [www.FAASafety.gov](http://www.FAASafety.gov). Required WINGS activities may be revised over time and reflected on [www.FAASafety.gov](http://www.FAASafety.gov) whenever statistical data indicates a change is necessary.

## 5. APPLICABILITY.

**a. Who May Participate.** All pilots (including student pilots) holding an FAA-issued pilot certificate and any required medical certificate may participate in the WINGS Program. Pilots should request certificated or authorized flight instructors, flight schools, and qualified FAA Safety Team (FAASafetyTeam) industry members to participate with them in the WINGS Program. We encourage FAA-approved Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 142 training centers to invite their customers to participate in WINGS by following the special simulator-based syllabus available at [www.FAASafety.gov](http://www.FAASafety.gov). Pilots operating under 14 CFR parts 91 subpart K (part 91K), 121, 125, and 135 may also participate and benefit from the safety-related information associated with the WINGS Program. There is no limitation on participation in the WINGS Program for airmen who may have been involved in an accident or incident, as such airmen are encouraged to participate.

**b. Incentive Awards.** Airmen who participate in the program and satisfactorily complete a current phase of WINGS will not have to complete the flight review requirements of 14 CFR part 61, § 61.56. Section 61.56(e) states that participating airmen do not need to accomplish the flight review requirements of part 61 if, since the beginning of the 24th calendar-month before the month in which that pilot acts as pilot-in-command (PIC), he or she has satisfactorily accomplished one or more phases of an FAA-sponsored pilot proficiency award program. Each time a pilot earns a new phase of WINGS, it satisfies the flight review requirement regardless of how frequently or closely spaced the phase or award.

**c. Training Requirements.** Pilots earn a phase of WINGS by successfully accomplishing a specified number of knowledge and flight tasks. The requirements of these tasks, as found in the current PTS, correspond to leading accident causal factors, as described in paragraph 4 above. Each time the pilot successfully completes the specified set of tasks, he or she earns another phase of WINGS.

(1) Pilots must complete all of the required set of tasks for a phase of WINGS, three knowledge and flight activities, within a 12-month period to count toward that phase of WINGS. When pilots complete the set of tasks for a phase of WINGS, that phase of WINGS is valid for 12 months. Current requirements of the WINGS Program are available at [www.FAASafety.gov](http://www.FAASafety.gov).

(2) The WINGS Program generally requires pilots to demonstrate proficiency in both knowledge areas and flight maneuvers. Although a demonstration of proficiency is not always possible for knowledge activities such as safety seminars, a demonstration of proficiency is always required for flight activities and online courses. The appropriate PTS contains proficiency standards, including specific tasks for airplanes, rotorcraft, gliders, lighter-than-air, powered parachutes, and weight-shift control. The PTS also includes light-sport category aircraft of all types. Pilots may earn one phase of WINGS in an airplane, another phase in a helicopter, another phase in a hot air balloon, and so on.

(3) Pilots with multiple aircraft ratings select the category and class of aircraft in which they wish to receive training and demonstrate their flight proficiency. Pilots may demonstrate all proficiency requirements for any phase of the WINGS Program in the same category and class, or may demonstrate those skills in any category and class for which they are rated.

## 6. GENERAL INFORMATION.

**a. Tasks.** The WINGS Program has two main components: knowledge tasks and flying tasks. While most required activities are automatically selected for the participating pilot, participants may choose some tasks to suit their individual flying needs from a list of activities, events, and seminars, as explained at [www.FAASafety.gov](http://www.FAASafety.gov).

**b. Completion of Knowledge Portion.** Airmen can accomplish the knowledge portion in two ways:

(1) Airmen can choose from a broad selection of online courses and safety programs available at [www.FAASafety.gov](http://www.FAASafety.gov). Airmen receive automatic WINGS credit for successfully completing a qualifying online course.

(2) Airmen may also accomplish knowledge tasks at FAA Team-sanctioned safety meetings that conform to established selection criteria. Airmen who sign an attendance roster at the event will receive credit for their attendance when the FAA Team officially closes the event at [www.FAASafety.gov](http://www.FAASafety.gov). Note that when airmen sign the attendance roster, they must use the same e-mail address that is or will be used on [www.FAASafety.gov](http://www.FAASafety.gov).

**NOTE: Flight tasks are accomplished and skills are demonstrated to a standard of proficiency with an instructor who is authorized to give such flight instruction.**

**c. Accessing Accomplishments and Validations.** The airman's accomplishments and validation record is available at the airman's secure WINGS home page at [www.FAASafety.gov](http://www.FAASafety.gov). Airmen may allow others, such as an insurance company or aircraft rental agency, to view this secure document as necessary. Airmen can also print verification certificates for paper-based recordkeeping.

(1) Airmen must accomplish flying tasks with a qualified instructor and that instructor must verify that the airman accomplished the selected tasks to the appropriate standards. Airmen can accomplish documentation of these events online when the instructor, or other identified representative, verifies the accomplished work. The pilot may also use the [www.FAASafety.gov](http://www.FAASafety.gov)

system to e-mail a credit validation request to the instructor as explained at [www.FAASafety.gov](http://www.FAASafety.gov). Flying tasks reflect related PTS tasks. The FAA will update the flying tasks whenever a related part of the PTS changes, or when accident data indicates that a change is needed.

(2) Airmen who do not have access to a computer and desire to participate in WINGS may go to a WINGS instructor, a FAAS Team representative, a FAAS Team Program Manager (FPM), or any person with a computer who can assist the airman in creating a special [www.FAASafety.gov](http://www.FAASafety.gov) account. Airmen who have completed tasks and do not have access to a computer must have those tasks entered at [www.FAASafety.gov](http://www.FAASafety.gov) by a WINGS instructor, FAAS Team representative, or FPM. A description of this procedure is available at [www.FAASafety.gov](http://www.FAASafety.gov).

**d. Levels and Phases of WINGS.** There are three levels of WINGS:

- Basic WINGS.
- Advanced WINGS.
- Master WINGS.

(1) The standards for completion of phases at the Basic level of the WINGS Program are generally based on Private Pilot PTS. (An airman holding a sport or recreational pilot certificate may use those standards at the Basic level.) Likewise, the performance standards at the Advanced level of WINGS are generally based on the commercial pilot standards. For the Master level, they are generally based on the airline transport pilot (ATP) and commercial pilot with instrument and/or flight instructor standards.

(2) Airmen may earn an unlimited number of phases within each of the three levels of WINGS by completing the required activities for a phase of WINGS. The WINGS Program requires all participants to complete Phase 1 at the Basic WINGS level before airmen can receive credit for additional phases or advance to any of the higher WINGS levels. Primary accident causal factors are the basis for the required tasks for all phases at the Basic WINGS level and form a strong foundation for earning additional phases or advancing to higher levels. To reinforce a pilot's understanding of primary accident factors and to emphasize basic knowledge and flying skills, a pilot must complete a phase of WINGS at the Basic level at least once every 12 months.

(3) The design of the proficiency requirements for the advanced and Master levels of WINGS are for airmen who wish to train and study at a level that demands greater proficiency. Once a pilot completes Phase 1 at the Basic WINGS level, he or she may participate at any level. For the Master level of WINGS, airmen must have completed at least one phase in the Advanced level of WINGS. Each airman's My WINGS page at [www.FAASafety.gov](http://www.FAASafety.gov) will acknowledge and record all the accomplishments of that airman in WINGS, recognizing both the phase(s) earned and the level(s) of WINGS within which the airman achieves them. Each level, accompanied by an increasingly higher phase number within each level, indicates the airman's commitment to ongoing and consistent training. Airmen can print certificates with this indication from [www.FAASafety.gov](http://www.FAASafety.gov) for any phase or level at any time.

(4) In addition, since completion of any phase of WINGS at any level satisfies the requirement for a flight review (as specified in § 61.56(e)), the airman's My WINGS page at [www.FAASafety.gov](http://www.FAASafety.gov) will also acknowledge this. Airmen can print a wallet-sized certificate with flight review information at any time.

**e. Instructor Information.** Instructors are an integral part of the aviation community and, by modeling the best practices, play an important role in reducing the number of GA accidents. Because of this vital role, we strongly encourage instructors to earn a phase of WINGS themselves. However, there is no requirement for instructors to hold a current phase of WINGS to provide WINGS-qualified instruction. Instructors are eligible to renew their flight instructor certificate through participation in WINGS. The holder of a current flight instructor certificate, who serves as a flight instructor in the FAA's WINGS program, may renew his or her certificate in accordance with the following criteria, which is contained in the current edition of FAA Order 8900.1, Flight Standards Information Management System (FSIMS), Volume 5, Chapter 2, Section 11. That certificated flight instructor (CFI) must:

- (1) Hold a flight instructor certificate that has not expired,
- (2) Hold a current phase of WINGS (at any level) at the time of application,
- (3) Have evaluated at least 15 WINGS-accredited flight activities (any level) during which the CFI evaluates at least five different pilots, and make appropriate endorsements in the logbook of each pilot for each activity,
- (4) Present a record to an aviation safety inspector (ASI) showing that the CFI has met the requirements of subparagraph 6e(3) above within the preceding 24 calendar-months before the month of application for renewal of his or her flight instructor certificate, and
- (5) Present a completed FAA Form 8710-1, Airman Certificate and/or Rating Application Supplemental Information and Instructions, to an authorized person for renewal of his or her flight instructor certificate.

**NOTE: The FAA prefers that the Integrated Airmen Certification and/or Rating Application (IACRA) be used.**

**f. WINGS Program Modifications.** Modifications to the WINGS Program that are minor in nature will be made and explained at [www.FAASafety.gov](http://www.FAASafety.gov) without further need of revision to this AC.

**g. Frequently-Asked Questions.** Additional information about the WINGS Program and answers to many commonly-asked questions can be found on the "FAQ" page at [www.FAASafety.gov](http://www.FAASafety.gov). Pilots may also use the "Contact Us" link at the [www.FAASafety.gov](http://www.FAASafety.gov) homepage for more complex questions about the WINGS Program.

**h. Authorization for Completing WINGS Tasks.** An authorized instructor can record completed tasks of WINGS not recorded automatically at [www.FAASafety.gov](http://www.FAASafety.gov) in a logbook or other proficiency record with an endorsement similar to the following. This provides verification for later recording at [www.FAASafety.gov](http://www.FAASafety.gov) by an authorized individual:

*“I certify that (pilot’s name), holder of pilot certificate No. XXXXX, has satisfactorily demonstrated proficiency in the required tasks as outlined in the WINGS—Pilot Proficiency Program, activity number XXX on (date).”*

*“Instructor Name, Certificate Number, Expiration Date, and Signature”*

**i. Authorization for Completing WINGS Phases.** An FPM or authorized instructor may endorse the pilot’s logbook upon issuance of a phase of WINGS (as verified by a review of the airman’s WINGS completion certificate) as follows:

*“I certify that (pilot’s name), holder of pilot certificate No. XXXXX, has satisfactorily completed a phase of the WINGS Pilot Proficiency Program on (date) as outlined in the current edition of Advisory Circular (AC) 61-91, WINGS pilot Proficiency Program, which meets the requirements for a flight review as specified in § 61.56(e).”*

*“Instructor Name, Certificate Number, Expiration Date, and Signature”*

**NOTE: There is no requirement for this final endorsement but an authorized individual may use it to prove that he or she completed a flight review.**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

/s/ Raymond Towles for

John M. Allen

Director, Flight Standards Service