



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

AIRCRAFT DISPATCHER

Practical Test Standards

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FLIGHT STANDARDS SERVICE
Washington, DC 20591

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NOTE

Material in FAA-S-8081-10A, Aircraft Dispatcher Practical Test Standards, becomes effective June 1, 1995. All previous editions of this book become obsolete as of this date.

FOREWORD

The Aircraft Dispatcher Practical Test Standards (PTS) book has been published by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to establish the standards for the aircraft dispatcher practical test. FAA inspectors and designated examiners shall conduct practical tests in compliance with these standards. Instructors and applicants should find these standards helpful in practical test preparation.

William J. White
Deputy Director, Flight Standards Service

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INTRODUCTION

The Flight Standards Service of the FAA has developed this practical test book as a standard to be used by FAA inspectors and designated examiners when conducting the aircraft dispatcher practical test. Instructors are expected to use this book when preparing applicants for the practical test.

This publication sets forth the practical test requirements for the aircraft dispatcher certificate.

Information considered directive in nature is described in this practical test standard in terms such as “shall” and “must,” and means that the actions are mandatory. Guidance information is described in terms such as “will,” “should,” or “may,” and indicate actions that are desirable, permissive, or not mandatory and provide for flexibility.

The FAA gratefully acknowledges the valuable assistance provided by organizations and individuals who have contributed their time and talent in the development of the practical test standards.

This publication may be purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.

Comments regarding this publication should be sent to:

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Aviation Administration
Flight Standards Service
Operations Support Branch, AFS-630
P.O. Box 25082
Oklahoma City, OK 73125

PRACTICAL TEST STANDARD CONCEPT

Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR's) specify the areas in which knowledge and skill must be demonstrated by the applicant before the issuance of an aircraft dispatcher certificate. The FAR's provide the flexibility to permit the FAA to publish practical test standards containing specific TASKS in which competency must be demonstrated by the applicant before the issuance of an aircraft dispatcher certificate. The FAA will revise this book whenever it is determined that changes are needed in the interest of safety. Adherence to provisions of the FAR's and the practical test standards is mandatory for the evaluation of aircraft dispatcher applicants.

EXAMINER¹ RESPONSIBILITY

The examiner who conducts the practical test is responsible for determining that the applicant meets the standards outlined in the Objective of each TASK within the appropriate practical test standard. The examiner shall meet this responsibility by accomplishing an action that is appropriate for each TASK. For each TASK that involves “knowledge only” elements, the examiner shall orally quiz the applicant on those elements. For each TASK that involves both “knowledge and skill” elements, the examiner shall orally quiz the applicant regarding knowledge elements and ask the applicant to perform the required skill elements. The examiner shall determine that the applicant’s knowledge and skill meet the Objective in all required TASKS. Oral questioning may be used at any time during the practical test.

NOTE: Where appropriate, the applicant should be allowed to use reference material.

CREW RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (CRM)

CRM “... refers to the effective use of ALL available resources; human resources, hardware, and information.” Human resources “... includes all other groups routinely working with the cockpit crew (or pilot) who are involved in decisions that are required to operate a flight safely. These groups include, but are not limited to: dispatchers, cabin crewmembers, maintenance personnel, and air traffic controllers.” CRM is not a single TASK. CRM is a set of skill competencies which must be evident in all TASKS in this PTS. CRM competencies, grouped into three clusters of observable behavior are:

1. COMMUNICATIONS PROCESSES AND DECISIONS

- a. Briefing
- b. Inquiry/Advocacy/Assertiveness
- c. Self-Critique
- d. Communication with available personnel resources
- e. Decision making

¹ The word “examiner” is used throughout this standard to denote either the FAA inspector or FAA designated examiner who conducts the official practical test.

2. BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE OF A FLIGHT TEAM

- a. Leadership/Followership
- b. Interpersonal Relationships

3. WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT AND SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

- a. Preparation/Planning
- b. Workload Distribution
- c. Distraction Avoidance

Examiners are required to exercise proper CRM competencies in conducting tests as well as expecting the same from applicants.

CRM deficiencies almost always contribute to the unsatisfactory performance of a TASK. Therefore, the competencies provide an extremely valuable vocabulary for debriefing. For debriefing purposes, an amplified list of these competencies expressed as behavioral markers, may be found in appendix 1 of AC 120-51A. These markers consider the use of various levels of automation in flight management systems.

AIRCRAFT DISPATCHER PRACTICAL TEST STANDARD DESCRIPTION

The AREAS OF OPERATION are subjects in which an aircraft dispatcher must have knowledge and demonstrate skill. They begin with the preparation for the flight and end with emergency procedures. The examiner, however, may conduct the practical test in any sequence that results in a complete and efficient test.

The Objective lists the important elements that must be satisfactorily performed to demonstrate competency in a TASK. The Objective includes:

1. specifically what the applicant should be able to do;
2. the conditions under which the TASK is to be performed; and
3. the minimum acceptable standards of performance.

The REFERENCE identifies the publication(s) that describes or refers to the TASK. Descriptions of TASKS are not included in the aircraft dispatcher standards because this information can be found in references listed for each TASK. Publications other than those listed may be used as references if their content conveys substantially the same meaning as the referenced publications.

References upon which this practical test book is based include:

FAR Part 65	Certification: Airmen Other Than Flight Crewmembers
FAR Part 121	Certification and Operations: Domestic, Flag, and Supplemental Air Carriers and Commercial operators of Large Aircraft
HMR 175	Hazardous Materials Regulations
NTSB PART 830	Notification and Reporting of Aircraft Accidents and Incidents
AC 00-6	Aviation Weather
AC 00-45	Aviation Weather Services
AC 61-27	Instrument Flying Handbook
AC 120-51	Crew Resource Management Training
DOT/FAA/RD	Crew Resource Management: An October 1992 Introductory Handbook
AIM	Airman's Information Manual
SID's	Standard Instrument Departures
STAR's	Standard Terminal Arrivals
AFD	Airport/Facility Directory
FDC NOTAM's	National Flight Data Center Notices to Airmen
IAP	Instrument Approach Procedure En Route Low/High Altitude Charts, Pertinent Pilot Operating Handbooks and FAA-Approved Flight Manuals, Operations Specifications, Minimum Equipment List (MEL) and Configuration Deviation List (CDL)

NOTE: The latest revision of the references should be used.

USE OF THE PRACTICAL TEST STANDARDS BOOK

This practical test book contains only one practical test standard. When using the practical test book, the examiner must evaluate the applicant's knowledge and skill in sufficient depth to determine that the standards of performance listed for all TASKS are met.

All TASKS in this practical test standard are required for the issuance of an aircraft dispatcher certificate. However, when a particular ELEMENT is not appropriate to the aircraft, its equipment, or operational capability, that ELEMENT, at the discretion of the examiner, may be omitted. It is not intended that the examiner follow the precise order in which AREAS OF OPERATION and TASKS appear in the test book. The examiner may change the sequence or combine TASKS with similar Objectives to conserve time. The examiner shall develop a plan of action that includes the order and combination of TASKS to be demonstrated by the applicant in a manner that results in an efficient and valid test.

TASKS with similar Objectives may be combined to conserve time; however, the Objectives of all TASKS must be demonstrated at some time during the practical test. It is of the utmost importance that the examiner accurately evaluates the applicant's ability to perform safely as an aircraft dispatcher.

The examiner shall place special emphasis upon AREAS OF OPERATION which are most critical to flight safety. One of these areas is sound judgment in decision making. Although these areas may not be shown under each TASK, they are essential to flight safety and shall receive careful evaluation throughout the practical test.

In an automated environment, the examiner must require an applicant to demonstrate manual flight planning.

AIRCRAFT DISPATCHER PRACTICAL TEST PREREQUISITES

An applicant for an aircraft dispatcher practical test is required by the FAR's to:

1. have passed the appropriate aircraft dispatcher knowledge test since the beginning of the 24th month before the month in which the practical test is taken; and
2. obtained the applicable experience prescribed for the aircraft dispatcher certificate under FAR Section 65.57 and must provide documentary evidence of such experience or
3. have successfully completed an FAA-approved aircraft dispatcher training course within the past 90 days.

REQUIRED MATERIAL FOR THE PRACTICAL TEST

The examiner is responsible for supplying weather data for the test when current weather information is not available.

Materials to be supplied by the applicant are:

1. Company Aircraft Operating Manual or Flight Manual.
2. General Operations Manual and Operations Specifications.
3. En Route Low/High Altitude Charts.
4. Standard Instrument Departures.
5. Standard Terminal Arrival Routes.
6. Standard Instrument Approach Procedures Charts.
7. Flight Plan Form.
8. Load Manifest Form.
9. Dispatch Release Form.
10. Airman's Information Manual/International Information Manual.
11. Computer and Plotter.

SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE

The ability of an applicant to perform the required TASKS is based on:

1. showing competency within the standards outlined in this test book;
2. following emergency procedures as required by the FAR's and company procedures;
3. exercising good judgment; and
4. applying aeronautical knowledge.

UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE

If, in the judgment of the examiner, the applicant does not meet the standards of performance of any TASK performed, the associated AREA OF OPERATION is failed and; therefore, the practical test is failed. The examiner or applicant may discontinue the test at any time after the failure of an AREA OF OPERATION makes the applicant ineligible for the certificate sought. The test shall be continued only with the consent of the applicant. If the test is either continued or discontinued, the applicant is entitled to credit for only those AREAS OF OPERATION satisfactorily performed. However, during the retest and at the discretion of the examiner, any TASK may be re-evaluated, including those previously passed.

RECORDING UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE

The term "AREA OF OPERATION" is used to denote areas in which the applicant must demonstrate competency prior to being issued an aircraft dispatcher certificate. This practical test book uses the terms "AREAS OF OPERATION" and "TASK" to denote areas in which competency must be demonstrated. When a disapproval notice is issued, the examiner shall record the applicant's unsatisfactory performance in terms of AREAS OF OPERATION appropriate to the practical test conducted.

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I. AREA OF OPERATION: DISPATCH EXERCISE

A. TASK: FLIGHT PLANNING

REFERENCES: FAR Parts 65, 121.

NOTE: Where appropriate, questions on other AREAS OF OPERATION may be based on the assigned flight.

Objective. To determine that the applicant:

1. Exhibits adequate knowledge of flight planning by preparing a flight plan, load manifest, and dispatch release for a flight between designated points.
2. Plans the flight in accordance with regulatory requirements and company procedures, as appropriate.

B. TASK: OBTAINING WEATHER INFORMATION

REFERENCES: FAR Part 65; AC 00-6, AC 00-45; AIM.

NOTE: Where current weather reports, forecasts, or other pertinent information is not available, this information shall be simulated by the examiner in a manner which adequately measures the applicant's competence.

Objective. To determine that the applicant:

1. Exhibits adequate knowledge of aviation weather information by obtaining, reading, and analyzing the applicable items such as—
 - a. weather reports and forecasts.
 - b. pilot and radar reports.
 - c. surface analysis charts.
 - d. radar summary charts.
 - e. significant weather prognostics.
 - f. winds and temperatures aloft.
 - g. freezing level charts.
 - h. stability charts.
 - i. severe weather outlook charts.
 - j. constant pressure charts.

- k. constant pressure prognostics.
 - l. tables and conversion graphs.
 - m. SIGMET's and AIRMET's.
 - n. ATIS reports.
 - o. NOTAM's/NOTAM systems.
2. Correctly analyzes the assembled weather information pertaining to the proposed route of flight and destination airport, and determines whether an alternate airport is required. If required, determine whether the selected alternate meets the requirements of the FAR's and the operations specifications.

II. AREA OF OPERATION: AIRCRAFT

A. TASK: FLIGHT INSTRUMENTS

REFERENCES: FAR Part 65; AC 61-27.

Objective. To determine that the applicant exhibits adequate knowledge of the applicable aircraft flight instruments and systems, and their operating characteristics such as:

1. Altimeter.
2. Airspeed indicator.
3. Vertical-speed indicator.
4. Attitude indicator.
5. Horizontal situation indicator.
6. Magnetic compass.
7. Turn-and-slip indicator.
8. Heading indicator.

B. TASK: NAVIGATION INSTRUMENTS AND AVIONIC SYSTEMS

REFERENCES: FAR Part 65; AC 61-27; Operating Handbook, Flight Manual.

Objective. To determine that the applicant exhibits adequate knowledge of the applicable aircraft navigation instruments and avionics systems, and their operating methods such as:

1. VHF omnirange (VOR).
2. Distance measuring equipment (DME).
3. Instrument landing system (ILS)/microwave landing system (MLS).
4. Marker beacon receiver/indicators.
5. Transponder/altitude encoding.
6. Automatic direction finding (ADF).
7. Electronic flight indicating system (EFIS).
8. Long range navigation (LORAN).
9. Inertial navigation system (INS).
10. Radio area navigation (RNAV).
11. Doppler radar.
12. Autopilot and flight director.
13. Communications equipment.
14. Global positioning system (GPS).
15. Flight management system (FMS).

C. TASK: AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS

REFERENCES: FAR Part 65; Company Aircraft Operating Manual, Flight Manual.

Objective. To determine that the applicant exhibits adequate knowledge of the aircraft; its systems and components; its normal, abnormal, and emergency operating procedures; and (as appropriate to the aircraft) the use of correct terminology with regard to such items as:

1. Landing gear.
2. Powerplant/systems/components (reciprocating, turboprop, turbojet).
3. Fuel system.
4. Oil system.
5. Hydraulic system.
6. Electrical system.
7. Environmental system.
8. Ice protection.

D. TASK: AIRCRAFT HANDBOOKS, MANUALS, MINIMUM EQUIPMENT LIST, AND OPERATIONS SPECIFICATIONS

REFERENCES: FAR Parts 65, 121; Company Aircraft Operating Manual, Flight Manual; Minimum Equipment List; Operations Specifications.

Objective. To determine that the applicant exhibits adequate knowledge of the operating handbook or flight manual with regard to TASKS A, B, and C, and the minimum equipment list, and operations specifications as appropriate.

E. TASK: AIRCRAFT PERFORMANCE AND LIMITATIONS

REFERENCES: FAR Parts 65, 121; Company Aircraft Operating Manual , Flight Manual.

Objective. To determine that the applicant:

1. Exhibits adequate knowledge of performance limitations, including thorough knowledge of the adverse effects of exceeding any limitation.
2. Demonstrates proficient use of (as appropriate to the aircraft) performance charts, tables, graphs, or other data relating to such items as—
 - a. accelerate-stop distance.
 - b. accelerate-go distance.
 - c. takeoff performance, all engines and engine(s) inoperative.
 - d. climb performance, all engines and engine(s) inoperative.
 - e. service ceiling, all engines and engine(s) inoperative.
 - f. cruise performance.
 - g. fuel consumption, range, and endurance.
 - h. descent performance.
 - i. go-around from rejected landing.
 - j. drift down.
3. Describes (as appropriate to the aircraft) the performance airspeeds used during specific phases of flight.
4. Describes the effects of meteorological conditions upon performance characteristics and correctly applies these factors to a specific chart, table, graph, or other performance data.
5. Computes the center-of-gravity location for a specific load condition (as specified by the examiner), including adding, removing, and shifting weight.
6. Determines that the takeoff weight, landing weight, and zero fuel weight are within limits.
7. Demonstrates good planning and knowledge of procedures in applying operational factors affecting aircraft performance.

III. AREA OF OPERATION: AIR ROUTES AND AIRPORTS

A. TASK: ROUTING

REFERENCES: FAR Parts 65, 121.

Objective. Using the appropriate en route charts, the applicant should:

1. Show the correlation and transition from one portion of the flight to another (SID to low altitude en route to high altitude enroute).
2. Describe the route over which the flight is to be dispatched including—
 - a. intermediate stops.
 - b. alternate airports.
 - c. refueling and provisional airports.

B. TASK: USE AND INTERPRETATION OF SID'S, EN ROUTE CHARTS, STAR'S, AND STANDARD INSTRUMENT APPROACH PROCEDURES

REFERENCES: FAR Part 65; AIM; Airport/Facility Directory; SID's; STAR's; En Route Low/High Altitude Charts, Standard Instrument Approach Charts.

Objective. To determine that the applicant:

1. Understands and can define such items as—
 - a. minimum en route altitude (MEA).
 - b. minimum reception altitude (MRA).
 - c. minimum obstacle clearance altitude (MOCA).
 - d. minimum crossing altitude (MCA).
 - e. standard instrument departure (SID).
 - f. standard terminal arrival procedure (STAR).
 - g. preferred routes.
 - h. RNAV routes.

2. Can locate such item on SID's and en route charts as—
 - a. VOR/VORTACS.
 - b. compulsory/non-compulsory reporting points.
 - c. VOR changeover points.
 - d. DME fix.
 - e. airway intersection.
 - f. symbols for MEA, MCA, and MRA.
 - g. clearance limit or transition (SID).

3. Can locate and discuss the following information on the appropriate instrument approach procedures chart—
 - a. field elevation.
 - b. touchdown zone elevation (TDZE).
 - c. aircraft approach category.
 - d. decision height (DH) and/or minimum descent altitude (MDA).
 - e. IFR approach/landing minimums (straight-in, circling, side-step, and radar).
 - f. takeoff minimums (standard/non-standard).
 - g. availability of radar service.
 - h. procedure turn limitations.
 - i. time/distance from final approach fix (FAF) to missed approach point (MAP).
 - j. published missed approach procedure.
 - k. obstructions.

C. TASK: AIRPORTS

REFERENCE: Airport/Facility Directory.

Objective. To determine that the applicant can:

1. Describe such items as the following at a specified airport—
 - a. runway lengths.
 - b. primary runway gradient and width.
 - c. displaced thresholds.
 - d. approach lighting system.
 - e. availability of VASI.
 - f. runway lighting system.

2. Discuss the following as it relates to the assigned dispatch—
 - a. runway visual range.
 - b. effect of inoperative components and visual aids on landing minimums.
 - c. IFR landing minimums for the alternate airport.
 - d. requirement with regard to the alternate for the departure airport.

IV. AREA OF OPERATION: AIRMAN'S INFORMATION MANUAL

REFERENCES: FAR Part 65; AIM.

Objective. To determine that the applicant has a working knowledge of the Airman's Information Manual and is able to discuss such topics as:

1. Navigational aids.
2. Airport/air navigation lighting and marking.
3. Airspace.
4. Air traffic control.
5. Airport operations.
6. Air traffic control clearances.
7. Preflight.
8. Departure/en route/arrival procedures.

V. AREA OF OPERATION: DISPATCH AND OPERATIONAL CONTROL

A. TASK: COMPANY OPERATIONS

REFERENCES: FAR Parts 65, 121; General Operations Manual; Operations Specifications.

Objective. To assure the applicant has knowledge of company procedures by discussing such items as:

1. Dispatch area, routes, and main terminals.
2. Approved instrument approach procedures.
3. Takeoff and landing minimums.
4. The difference in decision height as it relates to category (CAT I - CAT II - CAT III).
5. Use of minimum equipment list (MEL).
6. Configuration deviation list (CDL).
7. Air traffic flow control.
8. Redispatch.

B. TASK: REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

REFERENCES: FAR Parts 65, 121; HMR 175.

Objective. To assure the applicant has adequate knowledge of regulations pertaining to the dispatch and operational control of a flight by discussing such items as:

1. Dispatcher responsibilities.
2. Dispatcher/pilot responsibilities.
3. Required equipment.

VI. AREA OF OPERATION: EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

A. TASK: COMPANY POLICY

REFERENCES: FAR Parts 65, 121; General Operations Manual.

Objective. To ensure the applicant has knowledge of company procedures regarding emergency situations.

B. TASK: OTHER PROCEDURES AND SERVICES

REFERENCES: FAR Parts 65, 121; NTSB Part 830; AIM.

Objective. To ensure the applicant is familiar with the following services and procedures:

1. Responsibility for declaring an emergency.
2. Required reporting of an emergency.
3. Collection and dissemination of information on overdue or missing aircraft.
4. FAA responsibility and services.
5. Means of declaring an emergency.
6. NTSB reporting requirements.