

FAA regulatory changes – Part 2
By Richard Carlson – SSF Chairman

Last December, this column described several recent changes that impact Certificated Flight Instructors (CFI's). In summary, CFI certificates no longer have a printed expiration date, meaning that certificate no longer expires. Instead the FAA has moved to a "Recency of Experience" method where CFI's will document having completed one of the "Recency of Experience" training methods specified in 14 CFR § 61.195(b)(2) by submitting a form 8710-1, or 8710-11 for a Sport Pilot Instructor, to a FAA representative (FSDO ASI, DPE, ACR) for processing. Also new is 14 CFR § 197(a)(1) which provides a 3 calendar month 'grace' period to reinstate a CFI certificate by attending a Flight Instructor Refresher Course (FIRC) during this grace period. More details can be found in our December 2024 article.

Note also that the FAA has updated Appendix A of Advisory Circular 61-65J to incorporate the language instructors can use when making logbook endorsements.

This regulatory change also included a new set of instructions for training a new CFI as per 14 CFR § 61.195(h)(2) Flight Training. In order for a Glider CFI to provide training to a new Glider CFI applicant, the current Glider CFI must meet one of the following 3 criteria.

1. Have held a Glider CFI certificate for at least 24 calendar months and given at least 80 hours of flight training as an instructor;
2. Have trained and endorsed, during the preceding 24 calendar months, at least five applicants for a practical test for a glider pilot certificate or rating with at least 80% of those applicant passing on their first attempt;
3. Have held a Glider CFI certificate and given at least 80 hours of flight training, then graduated from a FAA-approved flight instructor enhanced qualification training program conducted by a part 141 or 142 glider flight school.

Criteria 1 is the current method that most glider CFI's follow when training a new CFI candidate. The point is to ensure that the instructor providing this training has the necessary skills and knowledge to do this effectively.

Criteria 2 is new, and is an attempt by the FAA to address the nation wide need for new CFI's. In the airplane world, some CFIs view the job as simply a stepping stone to an airline career and the FAA is concerned that the 2 year requirement is preventing qualified CFIs from providing this initial CFI training. It is not clear if this option will make much difference in the glider community where CFIs are not building time for that career change.

Criteria 3 is also new, and is another attempt by the FAA to increase the number of working CFI's. While also removing the 24 calendar month requirement, it requires the CFI to attend an approved class taught at a part 141 or 142 school. Since there are no such schools in the glider community, this will not be an option for us.

Note, that all of this applies only to a pilot seeking an initial Flight Instructor Certificate. The rules for adding an additional rating to an existing CFI certificate are spelled out in 14 CFR § 183 and paragraph

(j) still requires an applicant to have at least 15 hours as PIC in a glider before the CFI-G rating can be added.

One of the duties of your glider CFI is to endorse applicants for their practical (flight) test. This test is then conducted by a DPE. While most clubs have a local DPE that they use, the FAA changed the rules several years ago to allow any DPE to travel anywhere in the country to conduct this practical test.

When conducting this test the applicant must provide a suitable glider for this test. That means that the applicant must have a glider that is certified capable of performing all of the maneuvers listed in the current Glider Practical Test Standard (PTS). Most of the time that will mean using a glider with a Standard Airworthiness Certificate. That would be something like a SGS 2-33, ASK-21, or Grob G-103.

However in some cases the applicant wants to use a glider that has an Experimental Airworthiness Certificate. According to the FAA, an experimental aircraft falls into one of sixteen different categories. For gliders the 3 most common are Amateur Built (2), Exhibition (3), and Racing (4). When the owner registers the glider as experimental they select the appropriate category or categories. That could be something like an Arcus certificated as either Experimental/Exhibition, Experimental/Racing, or Experimental/Exhibition/Racing.

Last year the FAA updated the rules in Order 8900.1, Volume 5, Chapter 2, Section 1 (https://drs.faa.gov/browse/ORDER_8900.1/doctypeDetails) that DPEs must follow regarding the use of experimental aircraft during practical tests. In addition to ensuring that glider is certified to perform all of the maneuvers described in the glider PTS, it states the following:

“B. Experimental Aircraft. An applicant may request a practical test in an experimental aircraft. The aircraft may be certificated as experimental for all purposes listed in 14 CFR part 21, § 21.191, except for air racing. An evaluator may conduct a practical test in such experimental aircraft provided that all the following conditions are met:

- 1) The evaluator is willing to conduct the test.
- 2) The applicant is not prohibited from accomplishing the required tasks by the operating limitations issued for the experimental aircraft.

NOTE: If the experimental aircraft is not capable of performing all required tasks, another aircraft of the same category, class, and type, as appropriate, must be provided for those tasks that cannot be accomplished in the experimental aircraft.”

Thus, it is important to look at the paperwork for any glider a pilot wants to use for a practical test to ensure that it meets these requirements. As can be seen, some Arcus gliders are certified as Experimental/Exhibition and thus can be used during a practical test, while others are certified as Experimental/Racing and thus can be used only if the DPE agrees. If using a glider with an experimental airworthiness certificate, be sure and make that clear to your DPE. Don't let this type of issue become a reason you failed your practical test!