

VERSION 1.0

DESIGNATED PILOT EXAMINERS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT



Tools to Advance DPE
Safety and Professionalism

Provided to the DPE Community by:

[Insert Sponsoring Entity]

Introduction

The DESIGNATED PILOT EXAMINERS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT (Code of Conduct or DPEMCC) offers recommendations to advance safety and professionalism in the conduct of practical tests. In the United States, Designated Pilot Examiners (DPEs) act as representatives of the FAA Administrator, as designated and authorized per Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) Part 183. Internationally, DPEs are representatives of their respective civil aviation authorities, performing certification activities on behalf of those authorities. Likewise, other examiners, such as airline check airmen or military evaluators, provide the training and testing processes of their organizations.

The Code presents a vision of excellence for DPEs. Its principles complement and underscore legal requirements. The Code of Conduct will be most effective if users have a firm grasp of designee requirements as well as a commitment to professionalism as evaluators. It is intended to assist in evaluating the core principles that help aviators build a foundation of flight safety, proficiency, and wisdom.

The Code of Conduct has seven sections, each presenting Principles and Sample Recommended Practices.

The Sections:

- I. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF DESIGNATED PILOT EXAMINERS
- II. FLIGHT TEST SAFETY
- III. DPE TRAINING AND PROFICIENCY
- IV. SECURITY
- V. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES
- VI. USE OF TECHNOLOGY
- VII. DPE PROFESSIONALISM AND SAFETY CULTURE

The Sample Recommended Practices:

Sample Recommended Practices are suggestions for applying the principles of the Code of Conduct and tailoring them to individual designated pilot examiners. Sample Recommended Practices may be reordered, modified or eliminated to satisfy the requirements of each practical test and flight environment.

The Commentary:

Commentary on selected provisions of the Code of Conduct is published at <www.secureav.com>. The Commentary provides discussion, interpretive guidance, and suggested ways to adopt the Code of Conduct. Additional provisions will be added as the Commentary evolves.

Customization:

The Code of Conduct is a [model](#), not a standard. Users may revise the document—including [title](#), [length](#), and [organization](#)—to fit their needs. Provisions and Sample Recommended Practices may be reordered, modified or eliminated to satisfy unique requirements.

Benefits of the Code of Conduct:

The Code of Conduct benefits designated pilot examiners and the aviation community by:

- highlighting practices to support professionalism and safety among examiners,
- promoting ethical conduct, personal responsibility, and services to the aviation community and society at large,
- supporting improved communications between DPEs, applicants, instructors, regulators, and others in the aviation industry, and
- enhancing recognition of the important work DPEs perform.

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DESIGNATED PILOT EXAMINER MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

PRINCIPLES AND RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

I. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF DESIGNATED PILOT EXAMINERS

Designated Pilot Examiners should:

- a. make safety a top priority,
- b. apply and conform to applicable Airman Certification Standards (ACS) or Practical Test Standards (PTS), as appropriate, and guidance documents,
- c. evaluate each applicant thoroughly and objectively,
- d. demonstrate and evaluate sound judgment, aeronautical decision-making and airmanship,
- e. recognize and manage risks effectively, and evaluate sound principles of risk management,
- f. evaluate situational awareness, prudent operating practices and personal operating parameters (e.g., personal minimums),
- g. aspire to professionalism, and represent your agency or organization in a professional manner including conduct, language, appearance, and hygiene,
- h. act with responsibility and courtesy, and
- i. adhere to applicable laws and regulations.

Explanation: These General Responsibilities serve as a preamble to the Code of Conduct's other principles. They emphasize safety, excellence, risk management, and responsibility.

Sample Recommended Practices:

- Approach practical tests with seriousness and conduct them with diligence, recognizing that your life and the lives of your applicants, their future passengers, and others depend on you.
- Advise applicants that *perfection is not the standard*, that applicants are assumed able to pass at the outset of the evaluation, and that applicants serve as PIC with the privileges of the certificate they seek.
- Advise applicants that the role of a DPE is to monitor and evaluate, not teach.
- Conform to applicable practical test standards and provisions in the conduct of flight tests without additions, deletions, or exceedance of requirements. Develop written testing scenarios for each individual applicant.
- Set the highest examples of professionalism as a DPE.
- As a government representative during a practical test exhibit the professional behavior you would expect from an aviation safety inspector.
- Strive to establish a professional relationship with schools, instructors, applicants and other DPEs.

- Unprofessional relationships with your applicants, including sexual harassment, are never acceptable.
- Be sensitive to an applicant's personal matters, if they arise, while maintaining professionalism.
- Personal, political or religious beliefs should not be expressed while acting as a DPE. Avoid the appearance of bias, conflict of interest, or favoritism.
- Conclude each practical test, no matter the outcome, in a positive way.
- Approach each applicant with kindness and respect.
- Evaluate the applicant's correlative learning and situational awareness based on sound principles of airmanship, scenario-based testing, and risk management.
- Within the scope of your education, training, and authority apply a Safety Management Systems (SMS) approach to your role as a DPE.
- Review flight examiner methods and techniques with a trusted DPE-mentor as necessary.
- Evaluate Crew Resource Management, and Single Pilot Resource Management techniques.
- Evaluate application of risk management principles.
- Never allow simulated emergencies to become actual emergencies.
- Be aware of your susceptibility to, and seek to avoid or manage, distraction, fatigue, stress, and hazardous attitudes.
- Make personal wellness and an honest evaluation of your and your applicant's mental and physical fitness a precondition of each flight—for example, by using the *IMSAFE* (Illness, Medication, Stress, Alcohol, Fatigue, Emotion) checklist.
- Maintain professional grooming standards.
- Participate with professionalism in aviation social media to promote aviation safety. Be willing to provide accurate information about the testing process.
- Strive to return calls promptly from schools, instructors, or applicants who are requesting your services, even if your schedule is full. Returning calls demonstrates respect and helps to establish a professional relationship.
- Provide testing guidelines, minimum equipment requirements, and advance assignments in a timely manner to each applicant.
- Advise applicants of all testing fees, travel fees, payment methods, etc. in advance, and obtain their express consent to such fees prior to commencing the test. Provide a receipt to applicants for the testing fee.
- To the extent practicable, offer to meet applicant(s) and instructor(s) in advance to help relieve anxiety and to answer questions.
- Encourage CFIs to accompany the applicant to the practical test. Their presence can help avoid cancellations and problems with missing endorsements, etc. It also allows the CFI to attend the debriefing following the test.

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II. FLIGHT TEST SAFETY

Designated Pilot Examiners should:

- a. plan and conduct safe practical tests,**
- b. discuss inherent risks or safety challenges of a given flight test with the applicant, and address applicant concerns, and**
- c. consider an applicant's attention span, workload, fatigue, and tailor testing scenarios accordingly.**

Explanation: Although not typically the Pilot In Command, the DPE is responsible for the safe and efficient completion of the practical test. This responsibility extends to the safety of people on the ground and in other aircraft.

Sample Recommended Practices:

- In planning and conducting tests, anticipate the errors that the applicant may make, and the management of those errors and unsafe states. Consider the applicant's demonstration of risk management skills.
- Incorporate a discussion of areas to be evaluated in pre-test safety briefings, and elicit applicant discussion of any potential risks.
- Evaluate applicant assessment and management of risk throughout the practical test.
- Do not begin a test in an unairworthy aircraft.
- Recognize your role as safety pilot in the conduct of practical tests.
- Where warranted, advise that discontinuance is a viable option.

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III. DPE TRAINING AND PROFICIENCY

Designated Pilot Examiners should:

- a. take regular recurrent training to maintain and improve proficiency beyond legal requirements,**
- b. participate in flight safety education, and**
- c. remain vigilant and avoid complacency.**

Explanation: Training and proficiency underlie aviation safety for both evaluator and applicant.

Sample Recommended Practices:

- Pursue a rigorous, lifelong course of aviation study. Become familiar with theories of effective evaluation.
- Train to recognize and deal effectively with risks and emergencies unique to the flight test environment.
- Consider the pursuit of advanced teaching credentials and professional certifications.
- Maintain proficiency in the language and application of regulations. .
- Obtain adequate training before conducting a test in an unfamiliar aircraft, or with unfamiliar systems.
- Maintain proficiency in aircraft used for practical tests, including knowledge of flight manual specifications, installed avionics, automation, and other equipment.
- Join type clubs or support organizations supporting your test aircraft to learn more about their safe operation, including capabilities and limitations.
- Stay current with diverse and relevant aviation publications.
- Incorporate a periodic review of recent accidents and incidents, including local trends, into your testing scenarios, focusing on probable causes.
- Maintain mastery of applicable written and flight test standards.
- Maintain currency that exceeds minimum regulatory requirements and professional standards.
- Avoid testing maneuvers in busy airspace or over congested areas.
- Attend and actively participate in local safety seminars and forums.

- Advocate and participate in the WINGS program to achieve greater proficiency and safety.

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IV. SECURITY

Designated Pilot Examiners should:

- a. seek to maintain the security of all persons and property,**
- b. remain vigilant and immediately report suspicious, reckless, or illegal activities,**
- c. become familiar with the latest security regulations, and**
- d. avoid special-use airspace except when approved or necessary in an emergency.**

Explanation: Threats to security demand action. This Section addresses the DPE's role in promoting security awareness and preventing criminal acts.

Sample Recommended Practices:

- DPEs should check NOTAMS thoroughly during preflight preparation, and obtain updates during long flights, with emphasis on NOTAMS for airspace restrictions.
- Maintain familiarity with intercept procedures.
- Complete required security training annually.
- Report security concerns to the appropriate authorities.
- To help avoid special use airspace, consider the use of ATC radar advisories.
- Query applicant regarding hazardous materials and weapons in their luggage or on their person.
- Evaluate familiarity with the means to report and deter suspicious activities, such as AOPA's *Airport Watch* (866-GA-SECURE / 866-427-3287).

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V. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Designated Pilot Examiners should evaluate applicant's:

- a. efforts to mitigate the environmental impact of pre-flight, in-flight, and post-flight aircraft operations, and**
- b. efforts to respect and protect environmentally sensitive areas, and adhere to noise-abatement procedures.**

Explanation: DPEs should ensure applicant compliance with procedures or guidelines that reduce environmental impacts.

Sample Recommended Practices:

- Exercise care and judgement in selecting sites and altitudes for required practical test maneuvers, particularly over populated or noise-sensitive areas.
- Evaluate environmentally sound and legally compliant procedures for fueling, defueling, fuel sampling, and disposal.
- Observe and evaluate environmentally sound and compliant methods for all aspects of aircraft care, especially degreasing, de-icing, and handling hazardous materials.

- Ensure applicant awareness of the noise signature of test aircraft and adherence to noise abatement procedures provided safety is maintained.
- Evaluate applicant familiarity with the impact of aircraft on wildlife, and conformance with recommended practices (such as National Park Service minimum altitudes) when flying near wilderness and other environmentally sensitive areas.

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VI. USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Designated Pilot Examiners should:

- understand the operation, features, and limitations of aviation technologies in test aircraft sufficiently to (i) act as safety pilot if required, and (ii) effectively evaluate an applicant's use of the technology,**
- understand and evaluate the appropriate use of tablets and other portable electronic devices, including management of device failure, and awareness of the potential for misleading information, and**
- be familiar with the manufacturers' recommendations for simulating in-flight failures of avionics, tablets and other portable electronic devices.**

Explanation: Innovative, compact, and inexpensive technologies have greatly expanded the capabilities of aircraft. DPE understanding of the proper use of such safety-enhancing technologies is a prerequisite to evaluating an applicant's use and management of such technology.

Sample Recommended Practices:

- To act as safety pilot when required, and to evaluate applicant ability, the DPE should be familiar with proper management of navigation and autoflight systems including familiarity with all modes of operation and recovery from unintended activation.
- Be familiar with failure modes of test aircraft avionics including failures of tablets and other portable devices to ensure applicant ability to manage such failures.
- Applicants' individualized methods of managing equipment failure may be acceptable provided such methods are appropriate, effective, and demonstrably safe.

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VII. DPE PROFESSIONALISM AND SAFETY CULTURE

Designated Pilot Examiners should:

- advance and promote aviation safety and adherence to the Code of Conduct,**
- collaborate with local CFIs to pursue the shared goal of training pilots to fly safely and pass practical tests.**
- volunteer in and contribute to organizations that promote aviation, and use their skills to contribute to society at large,**
- demonstrate appreciation for other aviation professionals and service providers,**
- advance a DPE safety culture that values openness, humility, integrity, positive attitudes, and the pursuit of personal improvement,**

- f. foster professionalism by example,**
- g. promote ethical behavior within the DPE community,**
- h. mentor new and future DPEs, and**
- i. promote safety education programs.**

Explanation: DPEs should commit to the highest levels of professionalism and embrace a culture of safety.

Sample Recommended Practices:

- Strive to adopt and promote the Code of Conduct.
- Adhere to the highest ethical principles in all aviation dealings, including business practices.
- Invite constructive criticism from your fellow DPEs, aviators, and instructors, and provide the same when asked.
- Provide a debrief for the applicant and the instructor to promote improved training.
- Meet with instructors or flight schools periodically to discuss problem areas observed during practical tests. Participate in FAASTeam CFI/DPE Workshops.
- Encourage an “open door” policy with instructors.
- Recognize that DPEs are an important link in management of training quality in their area or organization, and they should discuss training, checking, certification processes and safety issues with the local FAA office and managing specialist.
- Share your aviation training knowledge, experience, and expertise with the industry.
- Serve as an *aviation ambassador* by providing accurate information, and refuting misinformation, when engaging with the media and the public at large.
- Contribute articles or papers to aviation journals or other media.
- Join and participate in professional aviation organizations.
- Promote, attend and contribute to safety and training programs offered by government or industry, for example, the FAA Pilot Proficiency Program (“WINGS”), the FAASTeam, and SAFE, and provide mentoring through informal discussions and by hosting seminars to present and discuss best practices for training and testing.
- Register at <www.faasafety.gov> to receive announcements of safety meetings, literature, and to review appropriate safety courses. Encourage your applicants to do so too.
- Volunteer in support of the aviation industry such as with youth groups and “career days” to share your expertise and enthusiasm.
- Express appreciation to controllers and service personnel for their valuable assistance.
- Seek to resolve disputes quickly and informally.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- *ACS Tips for Evaluators* FAA guidance on suggested scenarios and required briefings, https://www.faa.gov/training_testing/testing/acs/media/acs_tips.pdf
- *Notes for Prospective Implementers* helps facilitate Code of Conduct implementation <>.
- *Notes for Instructors* assists in teaching the Code of Conduct <www.secureav.com/Notes-for-Instructors.pdf>.
- Resources to help [*insert your organization here*] advance DPE skills and promote flight safety are available at <[www.\[your organization\].org/](http://www.[your organization].org/)>.
- Annotated *Commentary* helps interpret the Code of Conduct and provides source materials <www.secureav.com>.
- Further information about the role of DPEs and testing standards is available from the FAA:

- ❖ FAA DPE page <<https://tinyurl.com/FAA-DPEs>>
- ❖ 14 C.F.R. Sect. 183.23 *Pilot Examiners*
- ❖ FAA [Order 8900.2](#) *General Aviation Airman Designee Handbook*
- ❖ FAA Airman Testing Information <https://www.faa.gov/training_testing/testing/>
- ❖ FAA Order 8000.95 *Designee Management Policy* <<https://tinyurl.com/y6dzwb9g>>
- The Aviators Model Code of Conduct, the Aviation Maintenance Technicians Model Code of Conduct, the Designated Pilot Examiners Model Code of Conduct, the Flight Instructors Model Code of Conduct, the Glider Aviators Model Code of Conduct, the Helicopter Pilots Model Code of Conduct, the Light Sport Aviators Model Code of Conduct, the Seaplane Pilots Model Code of Conduct, the Student Pilots Model Code of Conduct, the UAS Pilots Code, and other safety publications are available at <www.secureav.com>.

NOTICE

The [*insert your organization's Code of Conduct*] is a customized version of the Designated Pilot Examiners Model Code of Conduct. © Aviators Code Initiative. All Rights Reserved. Terms of Use are available at <<http://www.secureav.com>>.

Pilots and the aviation community may use the Code of Conduct as a resource for code of conduct development, although it is recommended that this be supported by independent research on the suitability of its principles for specific or local applications and situations. It is not intended to provide legal advice and must not be relied upon as such.

EDITS, ERRATA, COMMENTS

The DPEMCC is a living document, intended to be updated periodically to reflect changes in pilot examining practices and the aviation environment. Please send your suggestions, edits, errata, questions, and comments to: <PEB@secureav.com>.

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