



APPLICATION & PROCESS:
KNOWLEDGE TESTING FOR PERSONNEL LICENSING

Purpose— This Advisory Circular (AC) provides general guidance to individuals desiring to complete the knowledge testing required for the issuance of a PEL license.

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SECTION 1 GENERAL

1.1 STATUS OF THIS ADVISORY CIRCULAR

This is an original issuance of this AC.

1.2 BACKGROUND

A. The use (or misuse) of language has been determined to contribute directly or indirectly to accidents. At other times, language is a link in the chain of events which exacerbates the problem. There are three ways that languages can be a contributing factor in accidents and incidents—

- 1) Incorrect use of standardized phraseologies;

- Advisory Circulars are intended to provide advice and guidance to illustrate a means, but not necessarily the only means, of complying with the Regulations, or to explain certain regulatory requirements by providing informative, interpretative and explanatory material.
- Where an AC is referred to in a 'Note' below the regulation, the AC remains as guidance material,
- ACs should always be read in conjunction with the referenced regulations.

- 2) Lack of plain language proficiency; and
 - 3) The use of more than one language in the same airspace.
- B. The International Civil Aviation Organization has adopted language proficiency Standards to ensure a minimum English language proficiency for international air traffic control communications.
- C. As a signatory to the ICAO Convention, Rwandas complies with the these Standards as outlined in this advisory circular.

1.3 APPLICABILITY

This AC is applicable to all individuals who intend to exercise unrestricted privileges of certain licenses issued by the RCAA. These licenses include—

- 1) Private pilots of aeroplanes, helicopters, powered lift and airships;
- 2) Commercial pilots of aeroplanes, helicopters, powered lift and airships;
- 3) All holders of instrument ratings;
- 4) Airline transport pilot of aeroplanes and helicopters;
- 5) Flight instructors for aeroplanes, helicopters and instruments;
- 6) Aeronautical station operators;
- 7) Air traffic controllers; and
- 8) All other persons who elect to have a license endorsement for radiotelephone operator privileges.

1.4 RELATED REGULATIONS

The following regulations are directly applicable to the guidance contained in this advisory circular—

- RCAR Part 7, Personnel Licensing

1.5 RELATED PUBLICATIONS

For further information on this topic, individuals are invited to consult the following publications—

- 1) International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
 - ◆ Annex 1, Personnel Licensing
 - ◆ Document 9835-AN/453, Manual on the Implementation of ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements
 - ◆ Circular 318, Language Testing Criteria for Global Harmonization
 - ◆ Circular 323, Guidelines for Aviation English Training Programmes

Copies may be obtained from Document Sales Unit, ICAO, 999 University Street, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3C 5H7.

1.6 DEFINITIONS & ACRONYMS

1.6.1 DEFINITIONS

A. The following definitions are used in this advisory circular—

- 1) **Accent.** A distinctive pronunciation of a language which is usually associated with a geographical region (for first language speakers) or with the phonological influence of another mother tongue (for second or foreign language speakers). All speakers of all languages have an accent.
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- 2) **Dialect.** A distinctive variety of a language, usually associated with social or geographical distinctions, which is characterized by differences in accent, vocabulary and grammar with regard to other varieties of the same language.
- 3) **Language proficiency skills.** The knowledge and abilities which impact on the capacity of a given individual to communicate spontaneously, accurately, intelligibly, meaningfully and appropriately in a given language
- 4) **Operational rater** or **Operational assessor.** A rater/assessor whose assessment will focus not only on the linguistic features of a candidate's performance but also on the appropriateness of a candidate's performance in a test with regard to professional standards and procedures (compare with "language rater/assessor").
- 5) **Plain language.** The spontaneous, creative and non-coded use of a given natural language
- 6) **Response.** The candidate's linguistic performance elicited by the input of a test item (e.g. an answer to a question).
- 7) **Test delivery.** The physical means by which test input is made available to the test-taker during test administration (e.g. paper documents, computer screen, audio sound-source, face-to-face encounter, etc.).
- 8) **Test examiner.** A suitably qualified and trained person who assigns a score to a candidate's performance in a test based on a judgment usually involving the matching of features of the performance to descriptors on a rating scale.
- 9) **Test-taker.** The person who is tested.

1.6.2 ACRONYMS

The following acronyms are used in this manual—

- 1) **AEPT** – Aviation English Proficiency Test
- 2) **AOC** – Air Operator Certificate
- 3) **RCAA** – Rwanda Civil Aviation authority
- 4) **ICAO** – International Civil Aviation Organization
- 5) **RCAR** – Rwandas Civil Aviation Regulation
- 6) **SARPs** – ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices

SECTION 2 RWANDA KNOWLEDGE TESTING POLICY

2.1 PROCESS FOR TAKING A KNOWLEDGE TEST

2.1.1 FIRST STEP

- A. The usual first step in the process of taking a knowledge test is for them to contact the RCAA-FSS office.
 - B. The RCAA-FSS Licensing Department will provide applicants with information relating to knowledge test prerequisites, required authorizations and endorsements, and where applicants can appear to take written or computerized knowledge tests and the appropriate fees involved.
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2.1.2 SECOND STEP

- A. The second step in the process of taking a knowledge test is for the applicant to receive an endorsement from an authorized instructor or Aviation Training Organisation that the applicant has completed the required training and is ready to take the knowledge test.
- B. Acceptable forms of endorsement are—
 - 1) A certificate of graduation or a statement of accomplishment certifying the satisfactory completion of the ground school portion of a course for the certificate or rating sought. The certificate or statement may be issued by an approved Aviation Training Organisation.
 - 2) A written statement or logbook endorsement from an authorized ground or flight instructor certifying that the applicant has completed an applicable ground training or home study course and is prepared to take the knowledge test.
 - 3) A RCAA Knowledge Test Report (pass/fail/expired), if the airman still has the original test report in his/her possession.
 - 4) An “expired test/credit” letter issued by the RCAA-FSS (in lieu of a duplicate RCAA Knowledge Test Report).

2.1.3 THIRD STEP

- A. The third step in the process of taking some knowledge tests is for the applicant to receive written authorization from RCAA-FSS to take the knowledge test.
- B. The exams that require a prior authorisation are—
 - Airline Transport Pilot
 - Flight Engineer
 - Commercial Pilot
 - Flight Dispatcher
 - Aircraft Maintenance Engineer

2.1.4 FOURTH STEP

- A. The fourth step in taking a knowledge test is to have the applicant proceed to the RCAA-FSS knowledge test center or a designated knowledge test examiner.
 - A list of contact information for knowledge test examiners will be made available upon request of the applicant.
 - The RCAA-FSS website also has this information available.
- B. An applicant for a knowledge test must provide proper identification.
 - Testing center personnel will not begin the test until the test applicant’s identification is verified.
- C. Upon completion of the knowledge test, each applicant will be given the results of the scoring of their knowledge examination.

2.1.5 REVIEW ANY INCORRECT ANSWERS

- A. The test examiner will be able to provide the applicant with the results and the knowledge areas that were answered incorrectly.
 - The applicant should be advised to use the recommended study aids to review the areas that they answered incorrectly.
 - B. An applicant’s instructor is required to provide instruction on each of the knowledge areas listed on the score sheet and to complete an endorsement of this instruction.
 - C. This endorsement must be presented to the flight test examiner prior to taking the skill test.
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- During the oral portion of the skill test, the examiner is required to evaluate the noted areas of deficiency.
- D. The AEB will provide a duplicate of the test results to an applicant if they submit an official request and fee payment to RCAA-FSS.

2.1.6 VALIDITY OF RCAA KNOWLEDGE TEST REPORTS

- A. RCAA Knowledge Test Reports for the Instrument Rating licence are valid for 24 calendar months.
- B. The applicant should plan to complete the skill test during the 24 calendar month validity period.
- If the RCAA Knowledge Test Report expires before completion of the skill test, the applicant must retake the knowledge test.

2.2 BRIEFING THE TEST RULES & INSTRUCTIONS

The applicant will be briefed on the following points before the beginning of the test—

- Answer each question in accordance with the latest regulations and guidance publications
- Read each question carefully before looking at the possible answers. Test applicants should clearly understand the problem before attempting to solve it.
- After formulating an answer, determine which choice corresponds with that answer. The answer chosen should completely resolve the problem.
- From the answers given, it may appear that there is more than one possible answer; however, there is only one answer that is correct and complete. The other answers are either incomplete, erroneous, or represent common misconceptions.
- If a certain question is difficult, it is best to mark it for review and proceed to the next question. After answering the less difficult questions, return to those marked for review and answer them.
- The review marking procedure will be explained to test applicants prior to starting the test. Although the computer should alert test applicants to unanswered questions, test applicants should make sure every question has an answer recorded. This procedure will enable test applicants to use the available time to maximum advantage.
- When solving a calculation problem, the answer closest to the applicant's solution should be selected. The problem has been checked with various types of calculators; therefore, if the problem has been solved correctly, the applicant's answer will be closer to the correct answer than any of the other choices.

- This briefing may be provided to the applicant in written form.
- Alternatively, the briefing may be provided through the computer as a prelude to the test.

2.3 USE OF TEST AIDS & MATERIALS

- A. Knowledge test applicants may use aids, reference materials, and test materials within the RCAA-FSS guidelines.

2.3.1 AVIATION-ORIENTED CALCULATORS

- A. All models of aviation-oriented calculators may be used, including small electronic calculators that perform only arithmetic functions (add, subtract, multiply, and divide).
- B. Simple programmable memories, which allow addition to, subtraction from, or retrieval of one number from the memory, are permissible. Also, simple functions, such as square root and percent keys are permissible.

The test examiner makes the final determination relating to test materials and personal possessions applicants may take into the testing area.

- C. RCAA-FSS personnel may provide a calculator to applicants and/or deny use of the applicant's personal calculator based on the following limitations—
- 1) Prior to, and upon completion of the test, while in the presence of the test examiner, applicants must actuate the ON/OFF switch and perform any other function that ensures erasure of any data stored in memory circuits, including removal of batteries. (
 - 2) The use of electronic calculators incorporating permanent or continuous type memory circuits without erasure capability is prohibited. The test examiner may refuse the use of the applicant's calculator when unable to determine the calculator's erasure capability.
 - 3) Printouts of data must be surrendered at the completion of the test if the calculator incorporates this design feature.
 - 4) The use of magnetic cards, magnetic tapes, modules, computer chips, or any other device upon which pre-written programs or information related to the test can be stored and retrieved is prohibited.

2.3.2 OTHER REFERENCES & AIDS

- A. Applicants may use any reference materials provided with the test.
- B. In addition, applicants may use scales, straightedges, protractors, plotters, navigation computers, log sheets, holding pattern entry aids, and electronic or mechanical calculators that are directly related to the test.
- C. Manufacturers permanently inscribed instructions on the front and back of such aids, e.g., formulas, conversions, regulations, signals, weather data, holding pattern diagrams, frequencies, weight and balance formulas, and air traffic control procedures are permissible.
- D. Applicants are not permitted to use any booklet or manual containing instructions related to use of test aids.
- E. Dictionaries are not permitted in the testing area.

2.4 CHEATING OR OTHER UNAUTHORIZED CONDUCT

- A. Knowledge testing must be carried out in accordance with the strictest security procedures to avoid test compromise.
- B. The Test examiner will terminate a test at any time that he/she suspects that a cheating incident has occurred.
- C. The RCAA-FSS security personnel will then conduct an investigation will then be conducted.
- D. If the investigation determines that cheating or unauthorized conduct has occurred, then any ai licence, certificate, or rating that the applicant holds may be revoked, and the applicant will be prohibited for 1 year from applying for or taking any test for a licence, certificate or rating under RCAR Part 7.

2.5 RETESTING PROCEDURES

- A. Applicants who receive a grade lower than 75 percent and who wish to retest must present the following to the knowledge test examiner when appearing for the purpose of retesting—
 - A test score sheet.
 - A written endorsement from an authorized instructor certifying that additional instruction has been given, and the instructor finds the applicant competent to pass the test.
 - A written authorization from RCAA-FSS to retake the test.
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- B. Applicants possessing a RCAA Knowledge Test Report with a score of 75 percent or higher who decide to retake the test in anticipation of a better score, may retake the test after 30 days from the date their last test was taken.
- 1) The RCAA-FSS does not allow applicants to retake a passed test before the 30-day period has lapsed.
 - 2) Prior to retesting, applicants will be required to surrender any test score documentation provided by the RCAA-FSS to the applicant.

The last test taken will reflect the official final score.

End of Advisory Circular

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