

SOME BACKGROUND ON THE PRACTICAL TEST STANDARDS

The PTS have been with us since the mid-1980s. They spell out in detail the performance standards for maneuvers and procedures on the FAA's practical test, or checkride. All pilots must demonstrate compliance with these standards, and the practical test is the final hurdle for pilot certificates and ratings. The PTS are far more specific than the previous flight test guides and provide less leeway to the examiner in how the test is conducted. Yet, the PTS and the old flight test guides are similar in that they ask the applicant to demonstrate proficiency in specific maneuvers and procedures, but they do not necessarily measure how well an applicant integrates knowledge, skill and risk management expertise to conduct safe flight operations.

I've covered PTS deficiencies before in this journal (see "Ineffective Practical Test Standards," November 2012 *Aviation Safety*), so I won't delve further into other specific deficiencies inherent in the PTS. The important point is that the limitations of the current PTS are one cause of the stagnant general aviation safety record over at least the last 13 years.



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**Private Pilot
Practical Test Standards
for
Airplane
(SEL, MEL, SES, MES)**

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