



# GUIDE TO THE FLIGHT REVIEW

For Pilots &  
Instructors

**JACKIE SPANITZ**

COMPLETE PREPARATION FOR ISSUING OR  
TAKING A FLIGHT REVIEW INCLUDING BOTH  
THE GROUND AND FLIGHT REQUIREMENTS

**EIGHTH EDITION**

*Guide to the Flight Review for Pilots & Instructors*  
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## What is the Flight Review?

This guide to the flight review (previously called “Biennial Flight Review” or BFR) is a comprehensive guide to prepare for taking or issuing a flight review. The flight review has been an FAA requirement since 1974 and was developed to curb pilot-related accidents. Although it has accomplished this objective, there is still room for improvement. A standard flight review should offer an effective learning experience that will further reduce pilot-related accidents. The FAA’s guidance document reprinted in Appendix 3 provides some excellent and very specific recommendations on how to use the flight review in this capacity.

The flight review is not intended to be another checkride, but rather an assessment of the pilot’s skills. The sole objective is to determine if the pilot is safe in the operations he/she usually conducts.

Again, the flight review is meant to determine your ability to handle the airplane safely and with good judgment. It is not meant to be like the checkride, but rather instructional. The maneuvers performed in the flight should reflect the pilot’s experience and type of flying; the actions should be predictable to the instructor and conform to local procedures, with safety being the main concern. The flight review should be considered an opportunity. It could be performed annually, as recurrent or refresher training, or biennially, as required by 14 CFR §61.56.

## Flight Review Candidates

14 CFR §61.56 states that every pilot must take a flight review every 24 calendar months. This means *every* pilot must take a flight review in order to maintain pilot-in-command (PIC) privileges.

## 1 Introduction

### Requirements (14 CFR 61.56)

The conduct of the flight review is at the discretion of the flight instructor, but the FAA does state minimum requirements necessary for the satisfactory completion:

- 1 hour of flight training and 1 hour of ground training
- A review of 14 CFR Part 91
- A review of those maneuvers and procedures necessary for the pilot to demonstrate the safe exercise of the privileges of the pilot certificate
- A logbook endorsement stating the satisfactory completion of the check

See Appendix 1 for the complete 14 CFR §61.56, and Appendix 3 for the FAA's recommendations on content and best use of time during the flight review.

### Options for Completing the Flight Review

With safety in mind, the flight review can be completed in a manner beneficial to the pilot:

- *A flight review with a flight instructor*

Everyone can use some dual flight periodically. This would be a prime opportunity to brush up on skills not frequently used. If flights normally take place at a nontowered airport, flight into a busier airport could increase proficiency in radio communications, and airspace. If straight and level is the normal attitude, some unusual attitudes and hood-work would be beneficial. If flights are normally conducted within the local area, a cross-country could be planned.

This is the suggested route to take for those that don't have the opportunity to fly as frequently as they might like—work off that rust! See Appendix 3 for the FAA's recommendations on how to conduct an effective flight review.

- *Upgrade your pilot or flight instructor certificate*

The FAA does not specify which aircraft a candidate must use for the flight review (however, this might change in the future). With this in mind, this would be a prime opportunity to get that instrument rating, sea rating, multi-engine rating, glider license, or helicopter license. Any checkride meets the requirements of a flight review, so the sky's the limit! The FAA also states the flight review requirements can be accomplished in combination with other recency requirements: interpreted, this means candidates can become night current, instrument current, or tailwheel current (keep in mind that additional tasks will be added to meet both requirements).

This is the suggested route for those who are flying frequently, have little rust on their skills, and who are looking to expand their flying horizons. Again, safety is the main issue, and careful consideration should be taken before deciding which aircraft will be used. The NTSB suggests taking the flight review in the aircraft most frequently flown, or the most complicated aircraft for which you are rated.

- *The **WINGS** Program*

A person who has satisfactorily completed one or more phases of an FAA-sponsored pilot proficiency award program (the **WINGS** Program) meets the requirements of a flight review. This program was developed as a way to promote proficiency and safety, while providing a motivation for pilots to do so. What pilot doesn't feel satisfaction with an earned pair of wings?

It's a great program that gives pilots the opportunity to attend FAA safety seminars, participate in online courses — and be rewarded for meeting the regulatory requirements. See Appendix 4 and visit [www.faa.gov](http://www.faa.gov) for more information on the **WINGS** Program.

## **Conduct of the Flight Review**

Although the regulation (14 CFR §61.56, *see* Appendix 1) does not specify which maneuvers should be included in a flight review, the FAA has provided some guidance to include suggested procedures. Ultimately the contents of a flight review are at the discretion of the flight instructor, but for a consistent and thorough check, consult AC 61-98D (*see* Appendix 2), and the FAA's Guidance Document: "Conducting an Effective Flight Review" (*see* Appendix 3).

## 1 Introduction

The flight review should be conducted in an efficient manner, meeting the 1 hour ground and 1 hour flight requirement, without being excessive.

The following FAA documents are used as references throughout the book. Be sure to use the latest revision of each document when preparing for your flight review:

14 CFR Part 43	<i>Maintenance, preventive maintenance, rebuilding, and alteration</i>
14 CFR Part 61	<i>Certification: Pilots, flight instructors, and ground instructors</i>
14 CFR Part 68	<i>Requirements for Operating Certain Small Aircraft Without a Medical Certificate</i>
14 CFR Part 91	<i>General operating and flight rules</i>
14 CFR Part 107	<i>Operation and Certification of Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems</i>
NTSB Part 830	<i>Notification and reporting of aircraft accidents and incidents</i>
AC 00-6A	<i>Aviation Weather</i>
AC 00-45	<i>Aviation Weather Services</i>
AC 00-54	<i>Pilot Windshear Guide</i>
AC 61-134	<i>General Aviation Controlled Flight Into Terrain Awareness</i>
AC 68-1	<i>BasicMed</i>
AC 91-73	<i>Parts 91 and 135 Single Pilot, Flight School Procedures During Taxi Operations</i>
AC 91-78	<i>Use of Class 1 or 2 Electronic Flight Bag (EFB)</i>
AC 107-2	<i>Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS)</i>
FAA-H-8083-2	<i>Risk Management Handbook</i>
FAA-H-8083-3	<i>Airplane Flying Handbook</i>
FAA-H-8083-9	<i>Aviation Instructor's Handbook</i>
FAA-H-8083-15	<i>Instrument Flying Handbook</i>
FAA-H-8083-16	<i>Instrument Procedures Handbook</i>
FAA-H-8083-19	<i>Plane Sense: General Aviation Information</i>



FAA-H-8083-25	<i>Pilot's Handbook of Aeronautical Knowledge</i>
Order 8900.1	<i>Flight Standards Information Management System (FSIMS)</i>
AIM	<i>Aeronautical Information Manual</i>
FAA	<i>Recreational Flyers &amp; Modeler Community-Based Organizations (faa.gov/uas/recreational_fliers)</i>
TSA	<i>Transportation Security Administration (tsa.gov)</i>

### **Reader Resources**

See also the Reader Resource page on the ASA website at [www.asa2fly.com/reader/oegbfr](http://www.asa2fly.com/reader/oegbfr) for more related materials to supplement or update the information in this book.

## Candidate Information

### 1. Who must take the flight review?

All pilots who wish to exercise their pilot-in-command (PIC) privilege and do not meet the exemptions listed below. A pilot would be in violation of 14 CFR §61.56 if he/she acts as pilot-in-command after the expiration date of the flight review.

### 2. What procedures would exempt a pilot from the flight review requirement?

The following serve as exemptions from the flight review:

- 14 CFR §61.58 pilot proficiency check.
- 14 CFR Part 121 pilot proficiency check.
- 14 CFR Part 135 pilot proficiency check.
- 14 CFR Part 141 chief pilot proficiency check.
- Military pilot proficiency check.
- Any proficiency check administered by the FAA.
- Pilot examiner annual flight check.
- Checkride for any certificate or rating.
- Procedures specifically authorized by the FAA.
- Satisfactory completion of any phase of the FAA *WINGS* program.

### 3. Who can issue a flight review?

Any current flight instructor or other person designated by the FAA.

### 4. Is the FAA notified of an unsuccessful flight review?

No. The logbook endorsement states only satisfactory completion of the flight review. If the person issuing the flight review does not give the pilot the required endorsement, that pilot has the option of getting some dual instruction in the inadequate areas, or taking the flight review with another flight instructor.

## 2 Q&A: Questions Most Commonly Asked...

### 5. Can an instrument proficiency check (IPC) serve as a flight review?

No. By itself, the instrument proficiency check serves only that purpose; however, the two functions can be combined in the same flight. This calls for meeting both requirements and 2 separate endorsements for the proficiency check and the flight review.

### 6. Do student pilots require a flight review?

No. Flight reviews are required only by pilots holding a sport, recreational, private, commercial, flight instructor, or airline transport pilot certificate.

### 7. Why are flight reviews required?

The purpose of the flight review is to assess a pilot's skills in performing a *safe* flight.

### 8. A pilot's last flight review was completed on 3-22-19. When will it expire?

Flight reviews are current for 24 calendar months. This flight review would expire 3-31-21, or the last day of the month.

### 9. If a pilot has not had a flight review for more than two years, is his/her pilot certificate invalid?

No. Pilot certificates are issued for life, or until surrendered, suspended or revoked. Without a current flight review, however, the pilot may not act as PIC of an aircraft.

### 10. Can a pilot fly solo (be the sole occupant of the airplane) without a current flight review?

No. Solo flight requires the pilot to act as PIC which is illegal without a current flight review.

### 11. Does a pilot have to possess a current medical certificate to satisfactorily complete a flight review?

No. But the pilot may not act as PIC, either during the flight review or any time thereafter, until medical eligibility has been obtained. This is a driver's license for sport pilot, BasicMed

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COMPLETE PREPARATION FOR ISSUING OR  
TAKING A FLIGHT REVIEW INCLUDING BOTH  
THE GROUND AND FLIGHT REQUIREMENTS

With excerpts from Michael Hayes' popular *Oral Exam Guide* series, this *Guide to the Flight Review* is an excellent study tool for applicants and instructors alike, arranged in a question-and-answer format. Use when you're gearing up for a Flight Review, as well as for a general refresher! Other Oral Exam Guides available from ASA...

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