

Angle of Attack



What to Do with a Flight Review?

As all pilots know, one of the basic requirements to exercise the privileges of your certificate is to satisfy the flight review requirement outlined in 14 CFR 61.56. Although the regulation provides for several means of meeting this requirement, most pilots think of the flight review as a session with a flight instructor involving at least one hour of ground review and one hour of flight time.

But what do you do with those two hours of time? The conduct of what a flight review should be is the subject of much debate and speculation from both those giving, and those receiving the review. The goal is to ensure that flying knowledge and skills remain at a level appropriate to the certificate and to the kind of flying an individual pilot typically does. The regulations give the aviation instructor a lot of discretion with respect to what happens on a flight review. The same principle applies to the Instrument Proficiency Check (IPC) required under 14 CFR section 61.57.

To Review Before the Review

To provide additional (but optional) guidance, several years ago the FAA published a web-only document on *Conducting an Effective Flight Review*. Developed in collaboration with members of the government/industry General Aviation Joint Steering Committee, this document provides optional guidance and suggestions on how the instructor should approach and administer the flight review.

Instructors and pilots now have an additional resource — a long-awaited update to Advisory Circular 61-98, *Currency Requirements and Guidance for the Flight Review and Instrument Proficiency Check*. Available on the FAA website ([see link below](#)), AC 61-98B incorporates material from *Conducting an Effective Flight Review* as well as material from the optional *Instrument Proficiency Check* guidance published on the FAA website as a companion document to *Conducting an Effective Flight Review*.

As revised, AC 61-98B refocuses on its primary goal. “We wanted to provide a more usable and realistic document,” says Joseph Morra, an Aviation Safety Inspector who worked on the revision. “The

process was time consuming because AC 61-98A was about 20 years old and there were a lot of new things to consider and incorporate.

“One thing we tried to stress is that flight reviews should be conducted in the aircraft that best represents the kind of flying you do most, or the most challenging aircraft you regularly fly.” Morra says. While the regulations allow you to receive a flight review in any aircraft in which you are rated, the AC emphasizes the importance of representative experience. “If your regular ride is a Beechcraft *Baron*, a flight review in a Cessna 152 would cover you as far as the regulations are concerned, but is that really a good check of your abilities as they will normally be used?” Morra asks.

In addition, AC 61-98B discusses the conduct of the review and the importance of setting out expectations before beginning. The CFI should ask questions to determine what level of review will be needed and what areas of operation should be covered. For instance, the CFI should ask what type of flying the pilot normally does, and ascertain the level of recent experience. These questions also help determine whether the CFI is qualified to conduct the review. If you, as the CFI, have no experience in the pilot’s aircraft type, safety and professionalism require you to consider whether you are the right person to conduct the review. Another important part of setting expectations is to discuss time needed for an adequate review. Although the regulations set minimum times, a pilot who has been away from flying for several years will probably need more than one hour of ground review and one hour of flight time to meet the intent of the flight review.

If you are planning to either give or receive a flight review, be sure to take a look at AC 61-98B. And remember that the flight review is not just a box-checking exercise, but an opportunity to learn and improve your flying skills.

James Williams is FAA Safety Briefing’s assistant editor and photo editor. He is also a pilot and ground instructor.