



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

Aviation Safety

800 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20591

March 29, 2023

National Business Aviation Association  
1200 G Street NW, Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Messrs, McCullough and Koester:

Thank you for your letter dated November 30, 2022, titled “NBAA Request for Guidance on § 135.299 Pilot in Command Line Checks”. We appreciate the opportunity to explain the Federal Aviation Administration’s (FAA) position on this topic.

In your letter you state the following, *“FAA Order 8900, Volume 3, Chapter 20, Section 6, Paragraph 3-20-6-23 currently provides a pathway for operators to use existing check pilots from other part 135 certificate holders. However, this is a severely under-utilized provision due to the lack of available guidance.”*

FAA Order 8900.1, Volume 3, Chapter 20, Section 6 was updated on February 19, 2021. Additional guidance is provided in Paragraph 3-20-6-25 of this section allowing for the approval of a check pilot to serve more than one certificate holder for certificate holders issued OpSpec A031 with certain limitations based on the review of the overseeing inspector(s). Although this paragraph of the guidance is specific to training center instructors and evaluators, the process for POI approval and letter of authority issuance would still be applicable to a contract check pilot as referenced in Paragraph 3-20-6-23. We normally associate a contract check pilot with a training center, but that is not exclusive. Any qualified person performing checking for a certificate holder for which they are not employed by is considered a contract check pilot, and the policy references above are applicable.

To support greater awareness of this policy, the Air Transportation Division, AFS-200, is willing to partner with NBAA to develop a plan that creates greater awareness of the policy and how to utilize a contract check pilot who may be employed by a different air carrier. Additionally, we are planning outreach with General Aviation Safety Assurance offices to reinforce our existing policies that already support this approach.

In your letter you also addressed the use of video and communication technology (VCT) by FAA Inspectors to observe check flights remotely. You stated that some Inspectors were uncomfortable relying on the innovative use of technology and the memorandum’s around VCT usage due to the generic nature of the information they contained.

In response to the feedback received by our inspectors and industry stakeholders regarding the use of Remote Technologies (RT), FAA Order 8900.1 Volume 1 Chapter 3 Section 9 was

updated on December 23, 2022 with expanded guidance on the use of RT by FAA Inspectors. Please note, with the update of policy, VCT is now referred to as Remote Technology. This was done to align with agency policy. FAA inspectors and the air carrier should work together and jointly design how RT will be used for a given checking event, taking into considerations the benefits and limitations of this technology. As stated in this policy, emphasis should be placed on the appropriateness when considering the use of RT.

With regard to the recommendation within your letter concerning the development of a public database of approved check pilots by aircraft type, at the present time, there is greater value in continuing to work through the principal inspector and maintaining those relationships to arrange for checking events. Principal inspectors play an integral role in coordinating these events by ensuring qualified resources are performing checking events.

Again, thank you for your letter and the work the National Business Aviation Association undertakes in the interest of aviation safety.

Sincerely,

Robert Ruiz  
Director, Office of Safety Standards