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# Passing The Checkride

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Recently I was going over the faded, smudged and smeared ink representing hours gone past; and the thought had occurred to me that I had taken a good number of check rides. The percentage of pass was enough to make me glow with pride, although I'm really not "God's gift to aviation." What information could be gleaned from these experiences? We have all had a pilot of lesser experience come to us and ask, "What is my ride going to be like?" or "What will I do?" or "What will *he* ask?" The thought occurs to each of us, "How will I pass that check ride?"

First, consider that nothing is as difficult as the composite of stories

and fairy tales you've heard around the hangar. The man hasn't been born that could pass *that* check ride. Secondly, most of those stories stem from *some* facts, and we *can* learn from them.

As for what will happen on your ride . . . well, the appropriate flight test guide will show what maneuvers can be requested on your ride but remember that all check pilots, FAA examiners and designees are individuals and subject to change without notice. Each man may have his pet area, but if you are properly prepared, no sweat. But what is proper preparation? A key word is organization. Have required forms filled in,

together with all your licenses, certificates, medical, etc., current and in your possession, along with an airworthy craft and *its* proper paperwork, including engine and airframe logs, radio station license, registration, airworthiness certificate and flight manual, if applicable. Anything else? A hood, chart, your logbook, computer, plotter, pencil (don't borrow one from *him*, come prepared).

Go with a proper mental attitude. I'm not talking about precheckride jitters—about everyone comes down with that—but rather how you feel. A feeling of confidence is a great way to start. If you have worked hard and studied deep you should have no

trouble, but if you know in the back of your mind that you're not prepared, you should have called the day before to cancel. When I suggest a feeling of confidence, I am *not* saying go in there as a know-it-all. I read a sign not too long ago that said, "Those of you that know it all are really a pain to those of us that do." That about sums it up.

For the oral, just go in there, answer the man's questions and don't bluff. If you don't know something, level and more often than not the check pilot will help you work out a procedure you're not sure of. Bear in mind that, although this man is there to check you against the standards of the desired rating sought, it is also a chance to make small corrections or helpful hints to you before you get into the real world and exercise your new privileges. Contrary to popular belief, the check pilot does not eat nails for breakfast and spit out thumbtacks.

Well, you got through the oral—now the flight portion. Take a deep breath and relax. What goes from here? A call to weather? A flight plan? Preflight? Whatever it is, don't rush to

impress the man. Do it as you would (should) do it every day. Now you're off and flying, listen, think and act. Listen to your instructions; think about what he wants and how you should do it, and then execute it. Don't rush. A check ride lasting 1.8 hours is a lot better than two rides of 1.2 hours.

If you have a little problem with a maneuver, *don't sweat it*. Go on to your next maneuver. The check pilot is just liable to be looking out of the window when you are off 150 or 200 feet if the rest of your maneuvers have been average or better. Another key point should go without saying, but we'll say it anyhow. Don't place the aircraft in jeopardy. We all know how it is to be a passenger, and if you keep your passenger calm and unpuckered, chances are the ticket is in your pocket. Just do your best, and don't let something throw you.

Does anyone know the cost of pride? Pride has bought more airplanes, and lost more check rides than anything else. If you are on an instrument ride and the ILS is going like a windshield wiper—*don't* chase the needle. If you are a student pursuing his

private and your soft field landing looks like it is going to be hard—*get outta there!* Go around! Try again. The man will commend you on your judgment, and still give you another shot at that approach—just don't hurt *him*.

Well, the ride went O.K., you think. You're just taxiing in and you think you made it. Cool it! It's not over yet. Celebrate later. You don't need a taxi accident. Make a normal shutdown, install the control lock, chock the wheel and then go in. The man may have something to discuss with you. If you had a little problem aloft, he may think that only a small explanation is in order. If you are the type that gets huffy with people, you may walk out with a pink slip! Sit, listen, understand and learn. Well, *he* said you did good. Really, it was a letdown compared to all those stories that you heard. But, yes he *did* hit you harder on that one thing than you thought he would. Well, anyway, it's over. Over? No, just beginning. The pilot certificate you have—we all have—is one to learn with.

But you did pass . . . . You did pass! *YOU PASSED YOUR CHECK RIDE!* □