

Sport Pilot Examiner's Pet Peeves

Pet Peeves - To be human means to have subjective opinions. However, when it comes to taking a Proficiency or a Practical Exam the world (i.e., the FAA) insist on objective testing. So where does my human subjectivity come to play during an Exam. Well, I am required to follow the guidelines as written in the PTS (Practical Test Standards). But I am allowed to select additional areas or tasks as outlined in the PTS, in addition to any of the required tasks.

Therefore, here is my semi-official notice that I will always test on the following areas/tasks; and these areas/tasks have no Gray zones. The situation is clearly Black or White, relative to a Pass or Fail scenario! Hence, be advised!

- **"Clear Prop!"** - If you can't remember to "Clear the Propeller Area" before starting your engine – what else could you be forgetting!
- **Collision Avoidance** - (I.e., pre-scanning an area before maneuvering into a direction of airspace is an ABSOLUTE requirement) - so keep your head turning, your eyes scanning and be constantly aware for aircraft & obstacles! And let the Examiner know that you are scanning, “tell them” – don’t let them guess about it! Heck, as far as they know, you could just have a ‘crook’ in your neck.
- **Rushing a Take-off.** - Relative to PPC's, there is never, NEVER a need for an Emergency Take-off. Hence, you should ALWAYS have time to get a L.O.C. (Lines are free and clear of debris; all the cells are Open and the canopy is Centered) during your preflight take-off roll – before the wheels ever leave the ground, OR if you down have a L.O.C., then shut-it down (i.e., abort the take-off). [Note: That includes a L.O.C. on Touch & Goes too! Hence a PPC never does a T&G, it always does a TTG – a Touch, TAXI (checking for a L.O.C.) and Go!
- **Density Altitude** - The 4H “kids” Club is good club, but the 3 H's are bad – very bad when relative to flying conditions (Heat, Height & Humidity). Please thoroughly understand these 3 factors that induce a high Density Altitude. And know how these factors have a negative performance affect on your PPC. Also be informed as to the huge effect the weight of a passenger can have relative to your PPC’s aerodynamic performance.
- **Weather** – Know the weather conditions that can have relevance to potential turbulence conditions for our relatively fragile PPC.

- **Canopy UN-twisting** – You have got to be able to explain how you know that the canopy is layout correctly or if it is twisted! And please know – without hesitation; please know how to correct the canopy, if it is twisted.
- **Emergency Procedures**
- **Instructor applicants**
Endorsements -know what logbook endorsements are required

Exam Hints

- Checklists - Review and prepare a Preflight Checklist for the specific Make & Model of the 'N'#'d PPC that you will be inspecting.
- Distractions - Know that during a flight maneuver or even when scanning an area for aircraft (i.e., a collision avoidance exercise) - it is OK to ask the Examiner to WAIT (or hold) for an answer to an “in progress” question - until you finish a task or have more time to focus on the question. (Reminder: Yes, examiners will note if you can be distracted from a task ‘at-hand’; and yes, even after the Oral testing section of the exam has been completed, the Examiner can – and will – continue to ask PTS related questions.)
- Landings – Please, if you feel that your current landing setup is “off” (i.e., you perhaps will be going to go too long down the runway before touchdown) or that the weather/winds are currently not favorable for the present landing approach – Please know that you can – yes you really can - without penalty, Abort the landing and do a Go-Around. Aeronautical Decision Making (ADM) is indeed part of the PTS exam process! And hence making the smarter – the safer decision to abort a landing will surely gain you more respect from the examiner, than forcing a questionable landing setup.
- Traffic Pattern - Know that the preferred method to enter a traffic pattern over the PPC field is, for most (if not all) flight parks, is to enter at a 45° angle on the Downwind leg. Also, put on your preflight checklist a reminder to ask “What is the normal pattern for this field, a Right or a Left hand pattern?” and “What are the PPC landmarks for the field pattern?” Because rarely do PPC’s fly a normal traffic pattern at an established (i.e., documented or published) airport.

- Rectangular course task – Your intuitive nature from flying a powered parachute where you can look straight down with an almost unobstructed view to the ground below your non-structured approach to this task will normally be to fly directly over the rectangular course. However, you are advised to fly this pattern like a fixed-wing aircraft, from the outside of the rectangle (approximately 100 feet to the outside; pending your altitude) and enter this task again, on a 45° into the downwind leg
- "S" turns – This is a task that few – if any – transitioning PPC pilots have practiced. So be advised to enter the maneuver from the downwind side of the reference line and know that both semi-circles are to be the same size. Also remember that this task contains constant turns (i.e., there are no straight lines in this maneuver once you have crossed the reference line and begun the task). Practice for a comfortable arc size for your PPC and practice in varying wind conditions. The examiner is looking for your ability to correct for wind drift during the turns of this task. Also note that different from fixed-wing aircraft, since we PPC pilots do not commonly have a rudder, our wing is not required to be perpendicular to the reference line when you cross over it. Only our ground path is required to be perpendicular to the reference line when crossed.
- Turns about a Point-- Visualize and practice a comfortable size circle (too tight is too much work; and when too big, the task becomes harder to maintain consistency).

Dennis Stanley, DPE / CFI / UFIE
 Bonneville Skybase LLC
 801 816-0472
A10dss@comcast.net
www.bonnevilleskybase.com

Note: Thanks to Fredrick the Terrible for help with this list.