



## Chapter 736 Newsletter for March 2020

I sincerely hope everyone reading this missive is in good health and has not been adversely affected by the corona virus plaguing this nation. Let us hope a vaccine is found quickly so that life can return to normal.

### **KNOWLEDGE TEST PROVIDER PSI TEMPORARILY CLOSES CENTERS**

PSI, the FAA knowledge testing provider, is temporarily closing testing centers that it owns and operates in the United States and the United Kingdom. The closures come in response to the global coronavirus pandemic.

PSI CEO Stephen Tapp announced that the company's "owned and operated physical test centers" closed on March 19 in the United States and would close on March 20 in the United Kingdom. Centers in both countries would remain closed until April 13.

"We believe this is the right thing for our community to help keep one another safe during these challenging times," he wrote. "We will do all we can to support our team and bring them back to work as soon as it is safe to do so.

"As many PSI exams are administered at third party sites around the rest of the world, we also continue to monitor each of these test center locations and adhere to closures based on country and local requirements," he continued.

PSI is making daily updates to a [list of testing centers that have closed](#), broken down by country.

The company is relaxing its no-show and rescheduling policies through April 30 and has [detailed rescheduling procedures](#).

Testing center closures could impact pilot eligibility for taking knowledge tests. AOPA has requested that the FAA grant a ["maximum amount of flexibility"](#) regarding knowledge test expirations as well as practical exams, flight instructor certificate renewals, instrument proficiency checks, flight reviews, and more.

## **FAA URGED TO LIFT 'IMPOSSIBLE' COMPLIANCE BARRIERS**

With life on hold during the coronavirus pandemic, the clock continues to tick toward the dates when pilots' practical test and knowledge test eligibility ends, currency or instrument proficiency runs out, and flight instructor certificates expire.

Many pilots confront seemingly intractable dilemmas in the face of closures, curtailment of travel, and the recommendations of health officials to practice social distancing. For example, federal requirements require pilots to renew their medical certificate in person, to complete their pilot certification examinations within a certain amount of time, and to complete knowledge tests at off-site testing facilities. The current restrictions to the U.S. population create an impossible barrier for these individuals to meet the necessary airman and aircraft requirements.

One challenging situation confronts instructors whose certificates expire every 24 months and must be renewed by one of several methods within the 90 days before the expiration date (doing so afterward requires starting over with a practical test). Many CFIs renew via online flight instructor refresher courses—but others attend in-person FIRC's, many of which have now been **canceled** because of the coronavirus. Without an extension or relief, some individuals' instructor certificates will expire in the next month or two.

Some existing problems will be exacerbated during the coronavirus crisis: Dealing with limited availability of designated pilot examiners to conduct practical tests has been a **work in progress** for two years and now faces new obstacles. The FAA is considering waiving some DPE management policies, but some DPEs have canceled appointments with practical test applicants because of the outbreak. A related concern for applicants is that airman knowledge tests are valid as a practical test prerequisite for two years from the date they are taken. But if a knowledge test were to expire with testing facilities still closed, applicants would have no way to retake their knowledge tests, leaving them ineligible for the practical test indefinitely without some kind of FAA relief.

Reduced access to aircraft and CFIs could affect pilots' livelihoods and the ability to exercise their privileges by triggering a wave of expirations of instrument proficiency checks, flight reviews, and recency-of-experience intervals unless the FAA can make exceptions.

Medical certificate expiration dates are also looming. AOPA's medical certification team is monitoring the situation and working with the FAA on contingencies, he said.

Aircraft maintenance and continuing airworthiness requirements must also be addressed.

## **General Notes**

When we will be able to resume monthly meetings is up in the air (pun intended) at this date. How long the coronavirus pandemic and its attendant problems will persist is unknown. Will our Fly-In be affected as well as the Young Eagles program won't be known for some time. All we can do is follow the advice and edicts of the medical pros working on the situation and pray that a solution to the pandemic is found quickly.

Stay well my friends.