IEP CHECKLIST

A SAFETY ASSURANCE COMPONENT OF YOUR SMS

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October 2026

Operations 12.

Operational Control and Support (PART 135)

Operational Control and Support: Thorough operational control demands documentation, effective communication with crews and the capability to respond to changes, irregularities, or difficulties. There must be clear written procedures for mission preparation and flight following. Crews and those authorized to exercise operational control must have access to adequate weather, flight planning, and maintenance information. The company must have qualified personnel available to respond to the latest developments, make decisions, and provide guidance regarding aircraft performance, maintenance, and emergencies. The organization's different components maintain the ability to work in concert to resolving emerging problems.



PART 135



SCALE OF 1-5

1 – Unsatisfactory
2 – Poor
3 – Meets Minimum Standards
4 – Excellent
5 – Best Practice

If your answer is not a 3 or better, you must record a finding that requires corrective action.

1. The GOM contents clearly outline the operational control program and procedures and successfully meet A008 requirements.

(FAR 135.21, 135.23, 135.77; Order 8900.1 Volume 3, Chapter 25, Section 1; ARGUS Platinum 7.3; NBAA Management Guide 4.1.1)

(Policy) Employees must be thoroughly familiar with the op-spec detailing these procedures and not attempt to exercise operational control unless authorized, nor allow any other person or entity to do so. Appropriate program description details and company specific procedures in the GOM must describe required actions by company employees.

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2. All relationships with aircraft owners and their pilots, as well as leasing arrangements, are thoroughly examined to not impugn operational control.

(FAR 119.53, Order 8900.1 Volume 3, Chapter 25, Section 1, Order 8900.1 Volume 3, Chapter 25, Section 5; NBAA Management Guide 4.1.1)

(Policy) An owner may also not refuse the use of a pilot on the operator's roster in order to force the use of the owner's pilot(s) for charter flight; this infers the owner is exercising operational control over a Part 135 flight. Appropriate measures should be in place to ensure any aircraft owner is not 'holding out' for charter using the operating certificate by self-booking charter trips under the company operating name outside of the requisite operational control process.

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3. Individuals authorized to exercise operational control are designated in the GOM?

(FAR 135.23, 135.77, 119.69[d]; IS-BAO 13.4.1[a], ARGUS Platinum 7.3.1 [a] & [c]; NBAA Management Guide 4.1.1; Order 8900.1 Volume 3, Chapter 25, Section 1 and 6)

(Program/Procedures) This typically consists of individuals such as the Chief Pilot and Director of Operations; however, in the absence of the primary designated individual (s) with operational control, another qualified individual must be available to preform those duties when required. This person must meet the requirements of FAR 119.69 (d). This list of personnel must be consistent between Ops-Specs and GOM. Current company manning and positions must be accurately reflected to describe who has authority for operational control.

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4. At least one individual designated with operational control has the responsibility to initiate, conduct, and terminate every flight. They have the prerequisite expertise and training to evaluate fight dependent criteria such as visibility, icing, fuel load, etc.

(FAR 119.69[d], 135.69, Order 8900.1 Volume 3 Chapter 25, Section 1; IS-BAO 13.4, 8.1.6.1; ARGUS Platinum 5.4, 7.3; NBAA Management Guide 4.1.1)

(Program/Procedures) As a part of flight scheduling and dispatch processes, the designated individual must evaluate crew qualifications for the operation, verify that the aircraft assigned for use is listed in the Opsspec D085, and that the aircraft is airworthy under the approved maintenance inspection and airworthiness program.

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5. Adequate Training is provided and documented for individuals authorized to exercise operational control.

(FAR 119.69[d], Order 8900.1 Volume 3, Chapter 25, Section 1; IS-BAO 8.1.1; ARGUS Platinum 5.4; NBAA Management Guide 4.1.1)

(Program/Procedures) This training must be initial and recurrent to maintain awareness of operational control requirements. Alternates must also be trained in the event a designated individual is unavailable. Training in company specific procedures is also necessary to ensure internal processes are carried out correctly.

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6. Responsibilities are clearly delineated between tier 1 and tier 2 levels of operational control to ensure only direct employees or designated agents are exercising operational control.

(Order 8900.1 Volume 3, Chapter 25, Section 5; ARGUS Platinum 5.4.1 [a], 7.2.5 [b]; 7.3.1 [c])

(Program/Procedures) Only direct employees (Director of operations, director of maintenance, etc.) may hold tier one responsibilities such as ensuring the legality of a flight, aircraft, and crew. An agent or direct employee may hold tier two responsibilities. These responsibilities include flight planning, weight, and balance weather review, etc. However, it should be noted if 100% of tier 2 responsibilities are completed by agents, the FAA might examine your operation more closely to determine compliance. Op Spec A008 does not prohibit flight locating tasks from being performed by tier 2 personnel, provided systems are in place to ensure tier 1 personnel are notified, or have access to, current information relating to the status of airmen and aircraft conducting part 135 operations. Tier 2 flight locating personnel may also receive notification from flight crewmembers of aircraft needing to change destinations, while enroute, provided such information is passed along to a tier 1 employee for approval. All responsibilities must be outlined in the GOM.

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7. Before release each flight is verified to be in compliance with company SOPs and aircraft limitations.

(FAR 135.23 [b] & 135 subpart I; Order 8900.1 Volume 3, Chapter 25, Section 1; IS-BAO 13.4.1 & 13.4.4 [b]; ARGUS Platinum 7.3.1)

(Program/Procedures) Aircraft performance limitations and other flight preparation details must be verified. If a flight is self-dispatched remotely, the paperwork is deposited for documentation upon return to home base. This paperwork must always include an accurate manifest.

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8. Procedures are in place to communicate changes to or from the flight crew, and to notify applicable personnel in the operation. Circumstances requiring flight divert, delay, or cancellation are dealt with effectively.

(Order 8900.1 Volume 3, Chapter 25, Section 5; IS-BAO 13.4.4 [a]; ARGUS Platinum 7.3.1 [b], 7.3.3, 7.3.4)

(Program/Procedures) If an operational change from the initial release is required, a reasonable attempt should be made to contact tier 1 management or their delegate. Tier 1 management may also modify the flight status at their discretion, within the realm of any safety limitations defined by the PIC.

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9. A method for tracking every flight event is in place, even if a flight plan is not filed.

(FAR 135.79, 8900.1 Volume 3, Chapter 25, Section 5; ARGUS Platinum 7.3.1 [d])

(Program/Procedures) Is flight progress tracked in accordance with company procedures? Both scheduled and repositioning flights must be tracked. When an FAA flight plan is not filed, operators must have established procedures for following and locating each flight. The individual authorized to conduct operational control must be provided with at least the information required in a VFR flight plan. When operations are conducted in an area in which radio contact cannot be maintained with ATC, the individual authorized to exercise operational control must be provided with the location, date, and estimated time at which the PIC will reestablish radio or telephone communications. Flight-locating information must be retained at the operator's principal base of operations, or at other places designated by the operator, until the completion of the flight.

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10. There are defined overdue aircraft procedures that include notifying search and rescue authorities. Flight crews have access to appropriate information concerning SAR services along the route and are provided guidance and procedures on reporting aircraft incidents & accidents.

(FAR 135.79, 8900.1 Vol. 3 Ch.25, Sec 5; IS-BAO 13.4.3, 13.4.4; ARGUS Platinum 2.1.3 [a], 7.3.1 [f]; NBAA Management Guide 4.2.13)

(Program/Procedures) Procedures must be in place for responding to an overdue or unconfirmed aircraft, and other related emergencies. Procedures for specific overdue aircraft should be clear. Steps describing specific actions coinciding with specific overdue times facilitate effective actions. The system must be able to provide timely notification of an FAA or search and rescue facility. Coordination procedures with search and rescue authorities must be in place. Aircraft/personnel information must be well organized to inform SAR authorities with accurate information. The PIC shall have access to appropriate information concerning the SAR services in the area over which the aircraft will operate.

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11. The aircraft operator maintains full operational control over all aspects of the organization and flight event and does not relinquish control in any manner due to any external business arrangements.

(Order 8900.1 Volume 3, Chapter 25, Section 1, Order 8900.1 Volume 3, Chapter 25, Section 5; ARGUS Platinum 4.4.5, 5.4, 7.3.1[c]; NBAA Management Guide 4.1.1)

(Program/Procedures) The operator must ensure full operational control is not diminished due to any type of business agreement and is not transferred to another entity. For example, if a flight is arranged via a broker or for another operator, all facets of operational control for the flight must always completely remain with the certificated operator actually performing the flight. Persons authorized to exercise operational control need to ensure pilots who are flying for more than one operator are not used as the PIC for any passenger carrying flights (ARGUS Platinum 8.4.5). All passengers and crewmembers must recognize this with no ambiguity.

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12. All pertinent operation control records are well organized and readily available at flight operations home base.

(FAR 135.63; Order 8900.1 Volume 3, Chapter 25, Section 5; IS-BAO 8.5, 13.4.4 [b]; ARGUS Platinum 4.2, 7.3.1 [d & e]; NBAA Management Guide 4.1.10)

(Program/Procedures) As a part of demonstrating operational control, the operator must be able to produce accurate records such as training, flight time, drug test results, load manifests, operating certificate and Opspec.

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13. For multi-piloted aircraft, the PIC and SIC are formally designated for each flight, as well as the FAR Part under which the flight is conducted.

(FAR 135.109; Order 8900.1 Vol.3, Ch.25, Sec 5C; IS-BAO 13.4.2 [a]; ARGUS Platinum 4.5.1; NBAA Management Guide 4.1.9)

(Flight Crew) This documentation ensures the operational control responsibilities vested with the PIC are not ambiguous, and the duties and regulatory responsibilities of each pilot are defined.

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14. Company policies and procedures clearly establish guidelines defining the operational control authority granted to the PIC. No one in the company can override the PIC's full responsibility for the safety of flight.

(FAR 135.69; Order 8900.1 Vol. 3, Ch. 25, Sec. 5; IS-BAO 13.2.1.1, 13.2.9; ARGUS Platinum 7.3.1; NBAA Management Guide 4.1.9)

(Flight Crew) Ultimately the PIC has final authority and responsibility for the execution and safety of the flight. This must be defined in the company flight manual. From flight planning requirements to accident notification to recording flight times and aircraft defects, the specific duties of the PIC must be described. This must be defined in the GOM. Measures must be taken to ensure passengers recognize they cannot influence or interfere with the operational control authority of the PIC. Examples could be a company policy statement and/ or a passenger briefing card describing the operational control policy.

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15. Only qualified crew members are assigned to a flight in accordance with the regulations. Is the scheduling process properly documented?

(FAR 135.95; Order 8900.1 Vol 3, Ch. 25, Sec 5; IS-BAO 13.4; ARGUS Platinum 5.4.1 [b], 7.3.2)

(Flight Crew) Appropriately rated pilots and flight attendants with proper experience must always be assigned. If your company uses flight attendants, they must be appropriately trained for the aircraft and type of mission. This must be verified by the operational control authority before a flight is released. This also includes contract flight crew personnel, without exception. The process used to schedule trips and ensure legal crew and aircraft are used for those trips needs to be documented. If scheduling software is utilized, then use of the system should be described in the documented process.

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16. For each flight pre, and post departure contact with the flight crew is accomplished.

(FAR 135.79, Order 8900.1 Volume 3, Chapter 25, Section 5; IS-BAO 13.4.4 [a]; ARGUS Platinum 7.3.1 [b], 7.3.1 [d], 7.3.3; NBAA Management Guide 4.1.1)

(Communication) There must be contact with the flight crew before and after the flight. Various verification methods may be used, such as VHF radio, text messaging, email, or phone. No matter what method is used, the information must ultimately and directly reach an employee authorized to exercise operational control. Records of these communications should be kept in a historical log and be accessible in a timely manner. In-flight communication is not a requirement; however, if radio contact is not anticipated to be maintained with ATC, the person with operational control must be provided with the location, date, and estimated time the PIC will reestablish radio or phone communications.

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