

CHAPTER 104. CONDUCT A FEDERAL AVIATION REGULATIONS (FAR) PART 133 RAMP INSPECTION

SECTION 1. BACKGROUND

1. PROGRAM TRACKING AND REPORTING SUBSYSTEM (PTRS) ACTIVITY CODE: 1622

with monitoring a congested area operation (see Volume 2, Chapter 103 of this Handbook).

3. OBJECTIVE. The objectives of this task are to determine whether an operator continues to comply with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations, to deter violations, and to identify and correct operational deficiencies in the interest of safety. Successful completion of this task results in either a satisfactory inspection or an unsatisfactory inspection.

(1) For rotorcraft and equipment, a good approach is to conduct a normal preflight inspection, accompanied by the pilot, as though the inspector were going to conduct the operation personally. The inspector should not interfere with the operation or cause an unreasonable delay. However, the inspector should examine as many items as practical, such as the following:

5. GENERAL

A. Definitions. For external-load operations, a ramp check is generally an on-site surveillance of an actual external-load operation, rather than a spot check on a ramp. However, the surveillance could occur on a ramp, much in the same manner as a FAR Part 91 ramp check (see Volume 2, Chapter 56 of this Handbook).

(a) Check the aircraft and pilot documents.

(b) Compute the weight and balance.

(c) Check the communications equipment between all participating parties.

(d) Check the placards, cabin, cockpit, exterior, attaching means, release mechanisms, and winch operation, noting any abnormalities.

B. Initiation of Activity. A ramp inspection may be initiated by the National Program Guidelines (NPG), the Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) surveillance schedule, as a result of complaints against the operator, or at the inspector's discretion.

(e) ASK THE PILOT to power the cockpit in order to check the operation of the normal and emergency functions of the rotorcraft attachment system while in the cockpit.

C. Coordination with other FSDO's. If the inspector conducts a ramp inspection of an external-load operator certificated in another FSDO's jurisdiction, the Certificate Holding District Office (CHDO) must be provided the inspection results. The inspector may send the CHDO a copy of the job aid or a letter detailing the inspection and its results.

(f) Write down a description and a serial number of the attaching means so that an airworthiness inspector can follow up. Note the description and serial number of the approved personnel lifting device for Class D.

D. Presurveillance Activities. The inspector should record noteworthy observations and inspection findings in the Remarks section of the PTRS Data Sheet during surveillance. By recording the information on the PTRS Data Sheet, the inspector has a permanent, original document without having to repeat the effort later.

(2) The ground crew should be briefed in the use of hand signals even if radio communications are ordinarily used for coordination.

F. Surveillance Results

E. The Surveillance. Timing may be a critical element in surveillance. The ramp inspection is frequently a surprise spot check. The surveillance may also take place by appointment. Often, a convenient time for conducting a ramp check is in conjunction

(1) The inspector should immediately advise the pilot of any unsatisfactory items the inspector observed and inform the pilot that further operation without corrective action may constitute violation of the FAR.

(2) The inspector may recommend an increase in the number of ramp checks for an operator with unsatisfactory items, since on-site checks are necessary to verify compliance.

SECTION 2. PROCEDURES

1. PREREQUISITES AND COORDINATION REQUIREMENTS

A. Prerequisites. This task requires knowledge of FAR Part 133, FAA policies, and qualification as an Aviation Safety Inspector (Operations) with experience as a rotorcraft external-load pilot.

B. Coordination. It is desirable but optional to coordinate with the airworthiness unit.

3. REFERENCES, FORMS, AND JOB AIDS

A. References

- FAR Parts 1, 27, 29, 61, 91, and 133
- Advisory Circular 133-1, Rotorcraft External-Load Operations in Accordance with FAR Part 133
- PTRS Procedures Manual (PPM)

B. Forms

- None

C. Job Aids

- Ramp Inspection Job Aid (Figure 104-1)
- Sample letters and figures

5. PROCEDURES

A. Preinspection Activities. (For an operator certificated by the inspector's FSDO.)

(1) Open PTRS file.

(2) Review the FSDO file, including old PTRS remarks.

B. Document Review. (at the inspection site)

(1) Inspect the pilots' certificates and endorsements.

(a) Medical certificates must be second class or higher, issued within 12 preceding months.

(b) The pilot must hold a commercial or higher grade pilot certificate with rotorcraft class rating and appropriate type ratings.

(c) Logbook endorsements or letters of competency must reflect class authorization for the operation being conducted.

(2) Inspect the aircraft documents (airworthiness).

(a) A copy of the rotorcraft external-load operating certificate must be on board.

(b) A copy of the list of authorized rotorcraft and the N-number of the rotorcraft used must be on board.

(c) An approved Rotorcraft Flight Manual (RFM) must be on board.

(d) An approved Rotorcraft-Load Combination Flight Manual (RLCFM) must be on board (except restricted category aircraft).

(e) A registration certificate must be on board.

(3) Inspect other pertinent documents.

(a) If the ramp inspection involves a congested area operation, examine a copy of the approved Congested Area Plan (CAP). Determine whether to combine the ramp inspection with the monitoring of the congested area operation (see Volume 2, Chapter 103 of this Handbook).

(b) For operators with a Class D or IFR authorization, check the operations specifications (OpSpecs) for appropriateness and currency. (See Volume 2, Chapter 99 of this Handbook.)

C. Examine Rotorcraft and Equipment

(1) Verify the correct weight and balance.

(2) Check placards, cabin, cockpit, exterior, attaching means, release mechanisms, and which operation; note any abnormalities. (Airworthiness)

(3) Check the cockpit. ASK THE PILOT to power the cockpit in order to check the operation of the normal and emergency functions of the rotorcraft attachment system.

(4) Check the communications equipment between all participating parties.

(5) Check the attaching means for:

(a) Class A security: the presence of appropriate restraining devices Class A.

(b) Class B or C security: the operation of normal and emergency releases.

(c) Class D security: the attachment is approved (refer to attaching device approval data).

(6) Check the operation of the winch. Run cable in and out while on the ground. Listen for the quality of the winch mechanism, check cable markings (worn off), frayed cable, and swivels.

(7) Check the harnesses for security and wear.

(8) Conduct a general “walk around” aircraft inspection.

D. Surveillance of the Ground Crew. Verify that the ground crew was sufficiently briefed on:

- (1) hand signals;
- (2) radio phraseology and procedures;
- (3) stoppage of operation if sudden hazard appears;
- (4) emergency procedures;
- (5) the approved CAP, if applicable.

E. Survey an Actual Operation. See Volume 2, Chapter 103 of this Handbook for CAP's. For general operations, check the pilot's proficiency for the following:

- (1) smoothness of control;
- (2) minimum of load oscillation;
- (3) proper pickup of load;
- (4) correct placement of load;
- (5) altitude control; and

(6) clear communication with ground crew followed by appropriate action by either radio or hand signal.

F. Satisfactory Inspection. Indicate satisfactory on the job aid if the inspection is satisfactory.

(1) Debrief the pilot on the site, if possible.

(2) Debrief the operator by telephone or in writing (Figure 104-2).

(3) Place a copy of the job aid in the FSDO file. If the operator was certificated in another FSDO's jurisdiction, provide a copy of the job aid and all correspondence to that CHDO.

G. Unsatisfactory Inspection. Take the following actions if the inspection is unsatisfactory.

(1) At the site:

(a) advise the pilot of areas of unsatisfactory performance or discrepancies; and

(b) document the discrepancies in Remarks section of the job aid and the PTRS Data Sheet.

(2) At the FSDO:

(a) a) inform the operator verbally of discrepancies, and write a letter to the operator confirming the discrepancies (Figure 104-3);

(b) see Volume 2, Chapter 182 of this Handbook, if an enforcement action is appropriate;

(c) send a copy of the inspection results to the operator's CHDO if applicable; and

(d) schedule followup surveillance and/or increase the frequency of surveillance.

H. PTRS. Close PTRS file.

7. TASK OUTCOMES

A. An indication in the operator's file of a satisfactory inspection, with or without discrepancies.

B. An indication in the operator's file of an unsatisfactory inspection.

9. FUTURE ACTIVITIES. Possible increase in surveillance schedule.

**FIGURE 104-1
FAR PART 133 RAMP INSPECTION JOB AID**

NAME OF OPERATOR	DATE			
	INSP. INIT.	S	U	N/A
PERSONNEL AND DOCUMENT INSPECTION				
I. PILOTS (Chief Pilot ____ Other Pilots ____)				
1. Medical Certificates				
2. Pilot Certificates				
3. Load class authorization				
a. Logbook endorsements				
b. Letter of Competency				
II. GROUND CREW				
1. Use of hand signals				
2. Use of radio				
a. Procedures				
b. Phraseology				
3. Emergency Procedures				
4. Knowledge of CAP				
III. ROTORCRAFT				
1. External-load operating certificate copy				
a. Current and accurate				
b. On board rotorcraft				
2. List of authorized rotorcraft				
a. On board rotorcraft				
b. N-number of inspection rotorcraft match				
3. Approved RFM on board				
4. RLCFM on board				
5. Rotorcraft registration on board				
IV. OTHER DOCUMENTS				
1. CAP				
2. Operations Specifications ____ Class D ____ IFR				
EQUIPMENT INSPECTION				
I. ROTORCRAFT				
1. Weight and balance				
2. Placards				
3. Cabin				
4. Cockpit				

**FIGURE 104-1—Continued
FAR PART 133 RAMP INSPECTION JOB AID**

NAME OF OPERATOR		DATE		
INSPECTION ITEMS	INSP. INIT.	S	U	N/A
II. ATTACHING MEANS				
1. Class A				
a. Security				
b. Appropriate restraining devices				
2. Class B and C				
a. Security				
b. Normal release operation				
c. Emergency release operation				
3. Class D				
a. Security				
b. Normal release operation				
c. Emergency release operation				
d. Approved Personnel Lifting Device				
III. OTHER ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT				
1. Winch operation				
2. Cables and harness				
3. General "walk around"				
OBSERVATION OF EXTERNAL-LOAD OPERATION				
I. PERSONNEL PROFICIENCY				
1. Pilots				
a. Smoothness of control				
b. Minimum of load oscillation				
c. Pickup of load				
d. Placement of load				
e. Altitude control				
2. Ground Crew				
a. Handling of load				
b. Response to situations				
c. Communications with pilots				
II. CONGESTED AREA OPERATION				
INSPECTION RESULTS				
I. PERSONNEL				
II. EQUIPMENT				

**FIGURE 104-1—Continued
FAR PART 133 RAMP INSPECTION JOB AID**

NAME OF OPERATOR		DATE		
INSPECTION ITEMS	INSP. INIT.	S	U	N/A
III. OVERALL RESULTS				
1. On-site debriefing				
2. Operator debriefing				
3. Information provided to CHDO				

REMARKS

FIGURE 104-2
LETTER ADVISING OPERATOR OF A SATISFACTORY RAMP INSPECTION

FAA Letterhead

[*date*]

[*operator's name and address*]

Dear [*operator's name*]:

The results of the inspection of [*type of aircraft, N-Number*] on [*date*] at [*location*] were satisfactory.

- List noticeably acceptable items, such as, flight crew cooperation and crew coordination.
- Encourage future compliance.
- Offer assistance, as necessary, to ensure future cooperation.

Sincerely,

[*signature of inspector who conducted the inspection*]

FIGURE 104-3
LETTER DESCRIBING DISCREPANCIES FOUND DURING RAMP INSPECTION

FAA Letterhead

NOTE: (NOTE TO INSPECTORS: This letter may also be used as the Letter of Investigation to initiate enforcement action for a certificated operator.)

[*date*]

[*operator's name and address*]

Dear [*operator's name*]:

The inspection of your facilities and equipment conducted on [date] was unsatisfactory. The following items were determined to be not in compliance with the Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR).

- list each specific item and the related FAR, for example:

A copy of the external-load operating certificate was not on board the rotorcraft.

This matter is under investigation by the Federal Aviation Administration. We wish to offer you an opportunity to discuss the incident personally and submit a written statement. If you desire to do either, this should be accomplished within 10 days following receipt of this letter. Your statement should contain all pertinent facts and any extenuating or mitigating circumstances that you believe may have a bearing on the incident. If we do not hear from you within the specified time, our report will be processed without the benefit of your statement.

Sincerely,

[*POI's signature*]

