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# InFO

Information for Operators

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*An InFO contains valuable information for operators that should help them meet certain administrative, regulatory, or operational requirements with relatively low urgency or impact on safety.*

**Subject:** Logging Instrument Approach Procedures (IAP)

**Purpose:** This InFO clarifies the conditions under which a pilot may log an IAP in his or her logbook. Logging IAPs is necessary for a pilot to show compliance with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) instrument currency and training requirements. Furthermore, the information contained in this InFO may be applied to instrument practical tests and instrument proficiency checks.

**Background:** Pilots have requested clarification and legal interpretations regarding what constitutes a "loggable" instrument approach. Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) Part 61 § 61.57(c) requires a pilot, rated to fly under instrument flight rules (IFR), to remain current in order to act as pilot-in-command (PIC) of a flight conducted under IFR or flight conditions less than the minimums prescribed for visual flight rules (VFR). Accordingly, § 61.57(c)(1)(i) specifies that an instrument-rated pilot must conduct and log a minimum of six IAPs every 6 months in order to maintain his or her IFR currency.[1] This requirement ensures instrument-rated pilots exercise IFR privileges to an acceptable level of proficiency and safety. To meet this requirement, pilots must understand the conditions that permit logging an IAP.

**Discussion:** Section 61.57(c)(1-5) permits a pilot to use one of four methods to conduct and then log IAPs:

1. Actual instrument flight conditions flown in an aircraft;
2. Simulated instrument flight conditions, using a view-limiting device, flown in an aircraft with a safety pilot;
3. Simulated instrument flight conditions conducted in any FAA approved:
    - Flight Simulator/Full Flight Simulator (FFS),[2]
    - Flight Training Device (FTD),[3]
    - Aviation Training Device (ATD),[4] or
4. A combination of methods 1 through 3 as prescribed by § 61.57(c)(4), or (5).

[1] See § 61.57(c)(3) for ATD requirements, when using an ATD for maintaining instrument experience.
[2] The FFS must be qualified under 14 CFR part 60 as a Level A-D.
[3] The FTD must be qualified under 14 CFR part 60 as a Level 4-7.
[4] An aviation training device is either an advanced aviation training device (AATD) or a basic aviation training device (BATD); it must have an unexpired letter of authorization (LOA) issued that specifies the period time in the device that may be used for instrument training and currency.

A pilot may log an IAP for currency or training when the pilot accomplishes the IAP in accordance with the following conditions:

1. When conducted in an aircraft, flight simulator, flight training device, or aviation training device, the pilot must operate that aircraft or authorized training device solely by reference to instruments [§ 61.51(g)(1)];
2. When conducted in an aircraft, flight simulator, flight training device, or aviation training device, the pilot must be established on each required segment of the IAP to the minimum descent altitude (MDA) or decision altitude/decision height (DA/DH);[5]
3. When conducted in an aircraft simulating instrument flight conditions, a flight simulator, a flight training device, or an aviation training device, the simulated instrument meteorological conditions (IMC) must continue to MDA or DA/DH;[6] and
4. When conducted in an aircraft, the flight must be conducted under actual or simulated instrument flight conditions [§ 61.51(g)(1)].

> **NOTE:** A pilot cannot log an IAP for currency in an aircraft without also logging actual or simulated instrument time. Simulated instrument conditions occur when a pilot uses a view-limiting device in an aircraft to prevent the pilot from seeing outside visual references. Consequently, a flight conducted under simulated instrument conditions requires a safety pilot. A safety pilot must possess a current medical certificate, occupy the other control seat, and be appropriately rated in the category and class aircraft flown [§ 61.3(c), § 61.51, § 61.57(c) and § 91.109]. The pilot operating under simulated instrument conditions must also log the name of the safety pilot.

5. When conducted in an aircraft maneuvering in IMC, and the aircraft transitions from IMC to visual flight conditions on the final approach segment of the IAP prior to or upon reaching MDA or DA/DH.

> **NOTE:** Except when being radar vectored to the final approach course, or otherwise directed through an appropriate air traffic control (ATC) clearance[7] to a specific IAP, pilots must execute the entire IAP commencing at an initial approach fix or associated feeder route and fly the initial segment, the intermediate segment, and the final segment of an IAP [AIM 5-4-7 (e)]. If the pilot completes these segments, or receives vectors to the final approach course, he or she may log the IAP.

The FAA does not require the ceiling to be at MDA or DA/DH during a flight in IMC. When an aircraft is flying an IAP in IMC, two outcomes are possible:

1. The aircraft will transition from IMC to visual meteorological conditions that allow a landing in accordance with § 91.175; or
2. The aircraft will remain in IMC and execute a missed approach at the missed approach point (MAP) or DA/DH.

In either case, a pilot may log the IAP.

[5] See FAA Chief Council Legal Interpretation to Daniel Murphy, June 30, 2009.
[6] During simulated instrument flight in an aircraft, it may be necessary to deviate from the final approach segment for safety reasons (e.g., in order to avoid traffic or other hazards). In these cases, the pilot may still log the IAP, provided the aircraft has passed the final approach fix (FAF).
[7] A safety pilot, authorized flight instructor or designee may simulate ATC radar vectoring.

Segment four (the missed-approach segment) is the only segment that is not required to be flown for an IAP to be logged. However, the FAA encourages pilots to practice transition from the final approach segment to the missed approach segment, as well as execution of the missed approach procedure, for proficiency.

The following three examples may help pilots determine when an IAP qualifies as an approach that may be logged:

Example 1: An instrument-rated pilot, conducting a flight under an IFR clearance, approaches the destination airport, aligned with runway 33 and 17 miles out. ATC issues a clearance that states, ". . . cleared ILS runway (RWY) 33R approach as published, maintain 3000, advise when established." The pilot operates the aircraft solely by reference to instruments, complies with the clearance, and continues in IMC—while remaining established as published on each required IAP segment. The aircraft descends past the final approach fix (FAF) as the pilot contacts the control tower and the aircraft transitions from IMC to visual metrological conditions (VMC) before reaching the DA. At this point, the pilot receives an ATC clearance to land; the pilot visually confirms runway environment assured and lands. In this example, the IAP complies with § 61.51(g)(3) and § 61.57(c); therefore, the pilot may log this IAP.

Example 2: A private pilot and flight instructor conduct an IFR training flight under VFR that concludes with a published IAP. The pilot operates the aircraft solely by reference to instruments under simulated conditions, using a view-limiting device. Shortly after the pilot completes the approach briefing, the flight instructor issues a series of simulated ATC radar vectors to the approach and soon says, "Skyhawk 123SP is two miles outside ALLDE (FAF), maintain 2000 feet until establish, cleared Localizer RWY 15 approach, advise when established inbound." The pilot in training complies, remaining established on the intermediate segment and proceeds to the final approach segment, while simulating IMC until MDA. The pilot remains established after crossing the FAF, receives an ATC landing clearance from the tower, terminates simulated IMC at MDA, visually confirms runway environment assured, and then lands. In this example, the IAP complies with § 61.51(g)(3) and § 61.57(c); therefore, the pilot may log this IAP.

Example 3: An instrument-rated pilot, wearing a view-limiting device, and safety pilot conduct an IFR currency flight, filed under IFR but accomplished in visual flight conditions. The pilot, approaching the destination airport completed the approach checklist and transmits, ". . . request own navigation, VOR RWY 22 approach." Shortly after, the pilot receives an ATC clearance that states, ". . . proceed direct WATERLOO (initial approach fix (IAF)), hold as published, maintain 3000, advise when established." Upon compliance, ATC transmits "Arrow 12345 cleared VOR RWY 22 approach, advise when established inbound." Maneuvering to remain established on each segment of the published approach, while continuing to operate the aircraft solely by reference to instruments under simulated conditions using a view-limiting device until reaching MDA, the pilot soon visually confirms the runway environment. After reaching the MAP, however, the pilot executes the missed approach procedure, under simulated conditions, and holds as published. In this example, the IAP complies with § 61.51(g)(3) and § 61.57(c); therefore, the pilot may log this IAP.

**Recommended Action:** Pilots training to become instrument-rated, instrument-rated pilots, flight instructors, and stakeholders should familiarize themselves with the information found this InFO.

**Contact:** Questions or comments regarding this InFO should be directed to Allan Kash, General Aviation & Commercial Division, AFS-810 at (202) 267-1100 or allan.g.kash@faa,gov.