

Part 135 Ramp Checks

I. **What to Do:**

- A. Know (and abide by) your regulations! The best way to stay out of trouble is to know what the rules are and not break them.
- B. Have the following items ready to present to the inspector. These are the four things he or she is guaranteed to ask to see.
 1. Your pilot certificate.
 2. Your medical certificate.
 3. The airplane's airworthiness certificate.
 4. The airplane's registration certificate.
- C. Make sure the following other items are in the airplane and readily accessible in case the inspector asks to see them.
 1. Your portable scale.
 2. Your GOM / Op Specs. Ensure that it has been fully and correctly revised!
 3. All current NACO aeronautical charts appropriate to your route.
 4. The aircraft Pilot Operating Handbook or Approved Flight Manual. (Some of our airplanes have POHs and others have AFMs.) If it's a POH, make sure the model and year matches the airplane's airworthiness certificate and registration certificate. If it's an AFM, make sure that the correct N number and airframe serial number are written on the first page.
 5. The aircraft checklist. Make sure that the model and year matches the airplane's airworthiness certificate and registration certificate.
 6. Your company Load Manifest form if you are arriving from or preparing to depart for a Part 135 flight leg.
 7. Your copy of the company HAZMAT training/operations manual, including DOT Chart 13.
 8. Your Emergency Response Handbook (the most recent edition).
- D. Cooperate fully. Be courteous and professional. Answer all direct questions pertaining to subjects such as the following.
 1. The airplane's maintenance status.
 2. Your flight / duty / rest time status.
 3. The loading and securing of cargo.
 4. Flight planning.
 5. Company policies.
- E. If the inspector makes it clear to you that he or she feels that a problem exists and that you are not legal to proceed with the flight, contact Dispatch and/or the Chief Pilot (me, extension 618) Director of Operations (Ernst Andersson, extension 650) and/or the Director of Maintenance (Pat Hawk, extension 620) to resolve the issue before continuing. It may be necessary to switch airplanes or fix something. Then again, it may be nothing more than a misunderstanding.
- F. Fill out the company Ramp / En Route Surveillance Report with the inspector's name, identification number and the Flight Standards District Office where he or she is based. (There is a copy included on the third page of this handout.)
- G. Also write down (in detail) any comments the inspector makes regarding safety or regulatory compliance, positive or negative.
- H. Fax this information to the Director of Operations (Ernst Andersson) at (407) 894-1260 as soon as practical.

II. What Not to Do:

- A. Of course you should always make every effort to comply with all federal aviation regulations, whether anyone is looking or not. If you suspect that you are being observed by an FAA inspector, however, you should be extra careful not to do anything obviously illegal that will catch the inspector's attention. Such errors might include:
 - 1. Forgetting to tightly and completely secure all cargo on board your airplane.
 - 2. Loading your airplane without weighing your cargo.
 - 3. Landing or taking off below minimum legal conditions.
 - 4. Taxiing at an excessive speed.
 - 5. Departing with inoperative instruments or equipment.
- B. Do not argue with the inspector or show an impatient, exasperated, evasive or hostile attitude. Even if you believe that the inspector is wrong about something, now is not the time for a confrontation. Listen politely, take notes and then contact the Director of Operations and/or the Director of Maintenance to work it out. And remember that there is always a good chance that the inspector may be right and you may be wrong. Don't dig yourself into a hole.
- C. Do not volunteer information. Answer only direct questions and provide the minimum information necessary to address what is being asked. Pilots often ramble and babble nervously during ramp checks and get themselves into trouble.
- D. Do not try to flee from the interview. This makes you look guilty and the FAA is likely to pursue you to find out what you've been doing wrong. Don't try to claim that you have an immediate scheduled departure – they already know what's on your Route Procedure. And don't run to the bathroom and then slip out the back door of the FBO, either. They will track you down sooner or later and the follow-up interview will be less cordial. Remember: they already know who you are, what airplane you're flying, who you work for etc.

III. The Two Kinds of Ramp Checks

- A. The "benign" kind.
 - 1. The FAA is required to conduct oversight on operators, including ramp checks, enroute checks ("ride-alongs"), observed checkrides and so forth. There are quotas to be fulfilled, such as doing a certain number of ramp checks after hours, doing them at different locations where the company operates and so forth.
 - 2. Additionally, other inspectors that you encounter at different airports might be conducting general surveillance, as opposed to focusing specifically on Flight Express.
 - 3. These inspections are largely random.
 - 4. This kind of ramp check is usually fairly brief.
- B. The "operator-induced" kind.
 - 1. If a pilot or company has been observed doing something unsafe or illegal, a ramp check or a series of ramp checks may follow.
 - 2. These ramp checks are often focused on particular problem areas.
 - 3. The pilot or company is already (potentially) in trouble.
 - 4. This kind of ramp check may be much longer and more comprehensive.
- C. To help us avoid the second kind of ramp check, always be safe and legal.

