

Introduction of new Flight Radiotelephony Operator's Licence (FRTOL) Practical Test format and FRTOL Examiner Qualification Procedures

CAP 2117 | Feb 2022

Introduction

This guidance is for existing Radiotelephony (RTF) Examiners, prospective FRTOL Examiners, FRTOL candidates, Approved Training Organisations (ATOs), Declared Training Organisations (DTOs) and Training Providers. Its content will be applicable from 14 March 2022.

Further information will be available in the all new soon to be published FRTOL Examiners' Manual (CAP2118).

The CAA recognises the risks posed by non-adherence to standard Radiotelephony phraseology and aims to reduce aviation risks generated by such non-adherences.

The principal areas of concern are:

- Airspace Infringements that are often caused by the lack of understanding of the Air Traffic Service (ATS) provided and/or the use of an inappropriate ATS Unit (ATSU)
- Airprox events
- Increase in non-standard and non-compliant radiotelephony phraseology
- Increased ATS and AGCS workload
- Lack of pilot understanding regarding UK Flight Information Services available and how to make best use of them
- Pilot lack of confidence when transmitting on aeronautical radio frequencies
- Pilots and other users operating aeronautical radio equipment without holding a FRTOL

The CAA aims to improve the current FRTOL testing system by introducing a new and more relevant FRTOL practical test format.

To help achieve this and to provide ongoing oversight of FRTOL Examiner standards, a panel of FRTOL Senior Examiners has been formed. The panel consists of both Industry and CAA Examiners and has input from General Aviation, Commercial Air Transport, Military, and ATS subject matter experts. One of the panel members is appointed as FRTOL Chief Examiner. The FRTOL Chief Examiner reports directly to the CAA Head of Radiotelephony Standards who maintains overall responsibility.

The panel has worked with the CAA to create a new guidance document to replace the current Standards Document 4. This will be the new FRTOL Examiners' Manual (CAP2118).

A new training and testing procedure for examiners has also been developed and will be introduced with the new FRTOL Practical Test roll out programme.

All holders of RTF Examiner privileges will be trained on the new test format by one of the FRTOL Senior Examiners before transferring to the new format. A new Examiner Assessment of Competence (EAoC) has been developed and will apply to all current RTF Examiners applying to become FRTOL Examiners as well as initial FRTOL Examiner candidates. The RTF Examiner Authorisation will become obsolete on 31 December 2022 and will be replaced by the FRTOL Examiner Authorisation.

Significant Changes

The new FRTOL Examiners' Manual and associated policy will bring the following significant changes to the current test system outlined in Standards Document 4:

- Practical Test routes will be based on actual UK VFR Aeronautical charts and frequency reference cards.
- Candidates may choose their own aircraft category for the test (Aeroplane, Microlight, Helicopter etc), with test differences guidance given to FRTOL Examiners.
- CAA RTF Aide Memoire will be available to candidates for use in the planning part of the test.
- Scenario based oral questioning included in the Practical Test.
- Updated set of Communication multiple choice papers pending access to the eExam system
- A multiple-choice test paper based on CAP2118 and CAP413 for new FRTOL Examiner applicants (including current RTF Examiners applying for the new role of FRTOL Examiner).
- Initial and 3 yearly Examiner Assessment of Competence (EAoC).
- Introduction of new flexible test equipment requirements.
- Examiner standardisation framework.
- A new comprehensive Practical Test report form (SRG2160).
- Mandated audio recording of all FRTOL Practical Tests.
- Updated FRTOL Examiner application form (SRG1155).
- CAA Hot Topic presentation delivered to successful FRTOL Practical Test candidates.
- New updated form SRG1171 'Practical Test Training Syllabus – Record of Completion' is now a mandatory requirement and must be presented to the FRTOL Examiner prior to conducting the FRTOL Practical test.
- Comprehensive new Examiner Manual (CAP2118)
- Guidance document for FRTOL applicants
- New Panel of industry Senior Examiners
- RTF Examiner role becomes obsolete and replaced by FRTOL Examiner

Practical Test Training Syllabus - Record of Completion SRG1171

To enable FRTOL Examiners to verify that the required Radiotelephony training has been completed prior to the Practical Test, and to confirm that the candidate is aware of the subject matter and knowledge required, SRG 1171 has been updated and its completion is **mandatory for all test applicants from 1 June 2022**. This mandatory requirement also includes applicants who will be attempting the current RTF Practical Test with Examiners who have yet to transfer to the new system.

Prior to attempting the Practical Test, the candidate must complete form SRG1171 and present this form to the FRTOL Examiner. Form SRG1171 must be signed by the person at the ATO, DTO or Training provider responsible for the training. Candidates who are not attending a recognised course of pilot training may self-certify. However, it is the responsibility of the FRTOL Examiner to first verify by questioning that the candidate has reached a satisfactory level of knowledge, prior to the Practical Test attempt.

New FRTOL Practical Test Format

The FRTOL Practical Test will replace the outdated current system that uses well-known and practised set routes, with the introduction of realistic and randomised test routes using current UK VFR Aeronautical Charts. FRTOL Examiners will have greater autonomy and scope to cater for those who fly aircraft other than single engine fixed wing types.

The FRTOL Practical Test will also include a section of scenario-based questions asked by the FRTOL Examiner that will confirm the candidate has a satisfactory knowledge of Radiotelephony procedures. FRTOL Examiners will also brief successful candidates on current safety related topics selected and reviewed regularly by the CAA.

The new FRTOL Practical Test can be conducted using simple testing equipment that does not require specialist software or expensive updates. Existing approved test equipment may continue to be used if it meets the minimum requirements set out in CAP2118. Online communication platforms with push to transmit (PTT) technology will be acceptable for the facilitation of the FRTOL Practical Test when the FRTOL Examiner and candidate are co-located in the same building. Online platforms will not be used for remote testing.

The FRTOL Practical Test has been designed to be easily adapted to future changes in procedures or legislation. Once all RTF Examiners have transitioned to FRTOL Examiner status and the previous RTF Practical Test system is fully withdrawn, the CAA may consider allowing remote testing in exceptional circumstances. Until that time, all tests will be conducted as now, using two rooms in suitable accommodation such as ATO/DTO premises.

FRTOL Examiners using a current UK VFR Aeronautical Chart and the appropriate aeronautical communication frequencies will be able to select routes that satisfy the test elements of CAP2118 therefore ensuring candidates demonstrate competence in realistic scenarios.

Trial Period

The CAA has overseen a limited trial to assess the robustness of the new FRTOL testing system to establish and correct any issues prior to full release. In the future it is hoped that the FRTOL Practical Test may be available to remote candidates using online technology. Therefore, the trial was conducted both in person and using online technology, to fully evaluate the testing platform. The FRTOL Practical Tests were carried out under the close oversight of the CAA Head of Radiotelephony Standards and were conducted by nominated FRTOL Senior Examiners. All candidates underwent a BGA approved Radiotelephony training course. This included one to one coaching and each candidate received a course completion certificate prior to being eligible for the Practical Test. For the purposes of this limited trial, an exemption was granted to allow partaking candidates to sit the Practical Test prior to the communication exam being passed.

Consultation

The CAA has communicated the proposed changes to several industry stakeholders including Flight training providers, Clubs and Associations. Feedback received has been positive and minor suggestions for improvement have been actioned and incorporated in CAP 2118.

Implementation Date

The target implementation date will be 14 March 2022. Please note:

- New initial applications for the position of a FRTOL Examiner will not be accepted until the existing RTF Examiners have been retrained and assessed (refer Group 3 below). *
- The priority order for RTF Examiners applying for FRTOL Examiner training and Assessment of Competence (EAoC) is described below.
- RTF Examiners with expired privileges who wish to renew will be treated as new applicants

* ATO/DTO's or Training Providers that have an urgent requirement for a new FRTOL Examiner should contact the FRTOL Chief Examiner at FRTOLchiefexaminer@caa.co.uk

Implementation Process

Existing RTF Examiners will be trained on the new system by a FRTOL Senior Examiner either individually or in small groups. This may be done in person or online using video conference platforms.

The FRTOL Examiner standardisation training will also include the use of new forms, candidate briefs, debriefing facilitation techniques, hot topic presentation skills and scenario based questioning techniques.

Prior to conducting tests using the new system, each FRTOL Examiner will undergo an EAoC in person with a FRTOL Senior Examiner.

This will normally be achieved by the applicant passing a multiple-choice examination to verify knowledge of CAP 2118 and CAP413, followed by the FRTOL Senior Examiner observing the applicant conducting an actual FRTOL practical test using a real FRTOL applicant. In exceptional circumstances the FRTOL Senior Examiner may play the role of the FRTOL applicant.

The order of priority for prospective FRTOL Examiners to be trained and assessed will be in accordance with the following process:

Group 1

RTF Examiner with expired privileges and on extension until 31 May 22

- RTF Examiner candidates in this category are to apply for the new FRTOL Examiner status by completing and submitting a **new initial** application using SRG1155 together with the appropriate initial fee. This **must** be received by the CAA **no later than 31 March 2022**.
- FRTOL Examiner candidates will continue to use the current RTF Practical Test system until successful completion of the EAoC.
- The FRTOL Examiner candidate will be contacted by a FRTOL Senior Examiner to arrange the standardisation training and the EAoC.

- On successful completion of the EAoC a Temporary Authorisation will be issued to the FRTOL Examiner pending completion of the CAA application process and Authorisation issue.
- The FRTOL Examiner authority will be issued with a new three-year validity period from the date of EAoC.
- Initial EAoC fee is payable to the CAA (fee includes the conversion training).

Group 2

RTF Examiners who have a valid authorisation but are due to expire between 01 June 22 – 31 December 22

- RTF Examiner candidates in this category are to apply for the new FRTOL Examiner status by completing and submitting a new initial application using SRG1155 together with the appropriate fee. This must be received by the CAA between 01 April and 01 May 2022.
- FRTOL Examiner candidates will continue to use the current RTF Practical Test system until successful completion of the EAoC.
- The FRTOL Examiner candidate will be contacted by a FRTOL Senior Examiner to arrange the standardisation training and the EAoC.
- On successful completion of the EAoC a Temporary Authorisation (SRG1100A) will be issued to the FRTOL Examiner pending completion of the CAA application process and authorisation issue.
- The FRTOL Examiner authority will be issued with a new three year validity period from the date of EAoC, (or from current date of expiry if EAoC completed within the validity period).
- Initial EAoC fee is payable to the CAA (fee includes the conversion training).

Group 3

RTF Examiners who have a valid authorisation but are due to expire between 01 January 23 – 30 June 23 and new Examiner applicants

- RTF Examiner candidates in this category are to apply for the new FRTOL Examiner status by completing and submitting a **new initial** application using SRG1155 together with the appropriate fee. This **must** be received by the CAA **between 31 July and 30 September 2022**.
- FRTOL Examiner candidates will continue to use the current RTF Practical Test system until successful completion of the EAoC.
- The FRTOL Examiner candidate will be contacted by a FRTOL Senior Examiner to arrange the standardisation training and the EAoC.
- On successful completion of the EAoC a Temporary Authorisation (SRG1100A) will be issued to the FRTOL Examiner pending completion of the CAA application process and authorisation issue.
- The FRTOL Examiner authority will be issued with a new three year validity period from the date of EAoC, (or from current date of expiry if EAoC completed within the validity period).
- Initial EAoC fee is payable to the CAA (fee includes the conversion training).

In all cases, prior to the new FRTOL Practical Route test format being used, an EAoC with a FRTOL Senior Examiner must be passed.

FRTOL Examiner Validity and Reauthorisation

The FRTOL Examiner Authorisation has a validity period of 3 years. To revalidate, FRTOL Examiners will be required to pass an EAoC with a FRTOL Senior Examiner within the last year of the validity period. This aligns the FRTOL Examiner requirements with other Flight Crew Licensing Examiner privileges.

RTF Examiners are reminded that they are responsible for applying for reauthorisation prior to the expiry date of their Examiner Authority. RTF Examiners who fail to revalidate prior to the expiry of their RTF Examiner Authority (or date of extension), will be treated as new initial FRTOL Examiner applicants.

Further Reading

Civil Aviation Publication [CAP 413](#) (Radiotelephony Manual)

[CAP 1585e](#) (Radio Telephony Examiner List)

CAP 2118 (FRTOL Examiners' Handbook)

The current Air Navigation Order 2016 (ANO) <https://info.caa.co.uk/uk-regulations/uk-ano/>

Full details will be available in CAP2118. Monitor [CAA Skywise](#) for updates to this process.