

Guidance for FRTOL Practical Test Candidates

CAP 2325 | March 2022

Introduction

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

The purpose of this document is to provide prospective FRTOL Practical Test candidates with all the relevant and important information in order to fully prepare for their FRTOL Practical Test.

The document relates to the new FRTOL Practical Test (effective 14th March 2022). Due to the roll out strategy, there will be an overlap of the new and old FRTOL Practical Test in 2022 as RTF Examiners transfer to the new system, therefore please check with your chosen Examiner to see which test system they are using.

Regulation of Licensing

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) is the UK's independent aviation regulatory body responsible for the licensing of flight crew, aircraft maintenance engineers and air traffic personnel. This includes Flight Radiotelephony Operator's Licences (FRTOLs) and FRTOL Examiner Authorisations.

The Wireless Telegraphy Act 2006 requires the Licensee of radio transmitting and receiving equipment installed in an aircraft to hold an Aircraft Radio Licence. The Licensee shall not permit any person to use the equipment unless they hold a FRTOL or act under the supervision of a person who holds a FRTOL issued by the CAA.

The Shared Services Centre is the division responsible for the issue of all licences, certificates and authorisations within the CAA.

Aircraft Radio Licences are issued by the Office of Communications (Ofcom).

Flight Radiotelephony Operator's Licence (FRTOL)

An applicant for the initial issue of a FRTOL must:

- be at least 16 years old.
- have passed the Communications Theoretical Knowledge Examination which must be completed before the Practical Test (the examination validity periods are as per FCL.025 - see paragraph 5.3).
- have passed the FRTOL Practical Test.
- have demonstrated English Language Proficiency (ELP) to level 4, 5 or 6 which must be valid on the date that the FRTOL is issued.

Applications for the issue of a FRTOL should be made online via the CAA website.

FRTOL Practical Test Training – Record of completion (SRG1171)

Prior to booking the Practical Test, the candidate must complete form SRG1171 and present this to the FRTOL Examiner. Form SRG1171 confirms that the minimum required Radiotelephony training has been completed prior to the Practical Test. It also confirms to the FRTOL Examiner that the candidate is aware of the subject matter and knowledge required in order to pass the test. Form SRG1171 must be signed by the person at the ATO, DTO or Training Organisation 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.

Use of SRG1171 is mandatory from 1st June 2022 for all FRTOL Practical Test applicants. This mandatory requirement also includes applicants who will be attempting the outgoing RTF Practical Test with Examiners who have yet to transfer to the new system.

Booking FRTOL Tests

It is the candidate's responsibility to identify and contact a FRTOL Examiner to arrange a FRTOL Practical Test, however the applicant's chosen training organisation should be able to assist. A list of FRTOL Examiners is available on the CAA website (CAP 1585e).

Overview of the FRTOL Practical Test

The purpose of the FRTOL Practical Test is to verify that a candidate has achieved the required knowledge and skills to safely operate radio equipment on board an aircraft and understands standard compliant Radiotelephony phraseology.

Candidates are required to have completed the Communications examination prior to sitting the FRTOL Practical Test. If the Communications examination was conducted by a different Examiner, evidence of passing this examination shall be provided to the FRTOL Examiner conducting the Practical Test.

The Practical Test consists of a simulated VFR 'flight' and a series of scenario-based questions. The FRTOL Examiner will also deliver a short 'Hot topic' presentation to successful candidates.

All candidates for the FRTOL will be assessed in accordance with the standard phraseology contained within the latest edition of the CAA Radiotelephony Manual CAP 413.

The FRTOL Practical Test will be facilitated by simulating the Radiotelephony transmissions of a flight in any of the following aircraft categories:

- Single engine fixed wing aircraft (Cessna 152, Piper PA28 etc)
- Single engine rotary wing (Robinson R22 etc)
- Microlight (Flexwing & Fixed wing)
- Gyroplane
- Pure Glider or sailplane
- Hot air balloon or Airship

Candidates whose category is not listed above (e.g. UAS, Engineers etc.) will agree the most appropriate category to be used with the FRTOL Examiner prior to test.

The candidate may choose a standard UK aircraft registration to use as their call sign and nominate a suitable aircraft type which will be agreed by the FRTOL Examiner prior to commencement of the test.

The candidate will play the role of a pilot who holds a flight crew licence, flying solo in a fully serviceable aircraft with standard flight instruments, VHF aeronautical radio and a transponder with an altitude reporting feature.

Required items for the Practical Test

Prior to commencing the test, candidates must show the following items to the Examiner:

- Personal photo identification (E.g. Passport or Driving Licence).
- Completed and signed form SRG1171.
- Evidence of Communications examination pass by reference to eExams or form CAA5003 (if already completed).
- Previous FRTOL Practical Test failure form (SRG2129) and SRG1171 (if applicable).

At the time of test, the FRTOL Examiner will provide the candidate with:

- A completed lateral and vertical flight plan of the test route, including departure, destination, alternate, tracks, headings, altitudes and times including route brief, simulated meteorological information and NOTAMs
- Standard CAA candidate brief.
- Frequency Reference Card.
- RTF Aide Memoire (Appendix A).

At the time of test, the candidate will provide:

- A current edition CAA VFR 1:500,000 aeronautical chart, region as agreed with the FRTOL Examiner.
- Chart pens and rule.
- Note paper and pen.

Practical Test Briefing

The FRTOL Practical Test briefing consists of the following elements:

- Standard CAA Candidate Brief
- Notification of the test route to be flown
- Candidate chart preparation (approximately 5 Minutes)
- Route and test brief from the FRTOL Examiner

The candidate may be provided with a copy of the standard CAA Candidate Brief prior to the test date. In all cases this brief must be reviewed with the candidate on the day of test and prior to the start of the route brief. A copy of the standard CAA Candidate Brief can be viewed in Appendix B of this document.

Once the Examiner has completed the standard CAA Candidate Brief, the FRTOL Examiner will disclose the details of the test route to be undertaken.

The candidate will then be given a short period of time (approximately 5 minutes) to plot the test route on the chart in readiness for the route and test brief.

Practical Test Planning

Once the FRTOL Examiner has completed the briefings the candidate will be allocated a further 20 minutes planning time. Any notes made by the candidate during this planning time can be used during the Practical Test.

The RTF Aide Memoire can be used by the candidate during the planning stage and during the Practical Test. No other aide memoires are permitted.

Practical Test Route

The Practical Test will involve simulating the required radiotelephony transmissions on a VFR flight between two aerodromes with a minimum of one turning point. This test will be facilitated using equipment provided by the FRTOL Examiner. The candidate and the examiner will be situated in separate rooms. Whilst this is not a test of navigation, knowledge of CAA aeronautical chart symbology is required.

The actual route to be used will be randomly selected and identified on the day of test by the FRTOL Examiner. This will ensure candidates are not aware of the test route beforehand. FRTOL Examiners must not pre-disclose any routes to any individuals, prospective candidates or training organisations in advance.

The candidate may choose which chart region to use, but the FRTOL Examiner will designate a route away from any areas or airfields familiar to the candidate.

When departing from, or arriving at an airfield, the FRTOL Examiner will use generic airfield information and instructions that are not necessarily representative of that airfield and its published procedures.

The Practical Test will be conducted at the candidate's own pace but should not exceed the maximum flight plan time of approximately one hour. The FRTOL Examiner may choose to intervene if required to ensure all elements of the test are completed within the required time.

Following the completion of a FRTOL Practical Test, documentation issued by the FRTOL Examiner shall not be retained by the candidate. All notes made by the candidate must be destroyed by the Examiner and the chart used shall have the marked route erased.

A minimum of one Emergency will be examined during the 'flight' part of the test. Regardless of the nature of the emergency, the candidate must be briefed for the purposes of the test to transmit an emergency call in full and in the correct order.

The FRTOL Examiner will inform the candidate that at some point during the "flight" that they will be made aware of an emergency which will remain until they are informed that the emergency no longer exists. During the route brief the candidate will be informed as to how they will be alerted of an emergency. On notification of the emergency, the candidate should initiate the required call without undue delay. It is reasonable for the candidate to collect their thoughts before transmitting but delays greater than 30 seconds before initiating the call would be considered too long.

FRTOL Examiner Role

Throughout the FRTOL Practical Test the FRTOL Examiner will simulate the role of an Air Ground Communication Service (AGCS) Radio Operator, a Flight Information Service Officer (FISO) or an Air Traffic Control Officer (ATCO) and will respond to all transmissions in that capacity.

FRTOL Examiners are expected to maintain the role play throughout the test. However, when necessary to comment outside of the role, the Examiner must make it clear to the candidate. For example, *'As the Examiner, I am now informing you that you have a rough running engine. You are concerned for your safety, but do not require immediate assistance. Please transmit the appropriate call.'*

Scenario Based Questions

Once the simulated 'flight' element of the test is complete, there will be an opportunity for the Examiner to probe the candidate's understanding of CAP 413, phraseology used during the test route, or for elements unable to be assessed due to the aircraft category used by the candidate.

Result and Debrief

Following a Practical Test, whether pass or fail, the FRTOL Examiner will debrief the applicant. If a fail is awarded, the reasons for failure will be clearly explained. The FRTOL Examiner will then provide appropriate advice and guidance to assist the applicant in any future attempt. If a Practical Test is interrupted for any reason, the incomplete test should will not be debriefed until the whole test has been completed.

CAA Hot Topic Presentation

Candidates who successfully pass the FRTOL Practical Test will receive a short CAA 'Hot Topic' presentation from the FRTOL Examiner.

The aim of this presentation is to highlight and promulgate a current safety related 'Hot Topic'.

English Language Proficiency

Unless otherwise authorised, FRTOL Examiners will assess the candidate's English language proficiency for Level 6 only, where appropriate.

Candidates unable to satisfactorily demonstrate Level 6 proficiency are required to attend a CAA approved English Language Assessment Centre.

A list of approved English Language Assessment Centres is available in Standards Document 31. The centre will issue the appropriate course and assessment forms.

Remedial Training and Retest

A candidate is entitled to three attempts at the FRTOL Practical Test. For each FRTOL Practical Test a different route and scenario must be used by the FRTOL Examiner.

Retraining may be recommended after failing a first attempt but is mandatory after failing a second attempt.

In the event of a fail, the FRTOL Examiner must complete form SRG2129 including the details of any further training requirement, whether recommended or mandatory. The written report should only contain items discussed in the verbal debrief.

Where an applicant has failed for the second time, the FRTOL Examiner must inform the CAA by e-mail (FRTOLChiefExaminer@caa.co.uk). The CAA Head of FRTOL Standards or the FRTOL Chief Examiner will nominate a FRTOL Senior Examiner to conduct the third test.

Candidates who have failed previous Practical Test attempts are not required to complete a new SRG1171, nor demonstrate completion of further training prior to a new test attempt, unless further training has been mandated by the FRTOL Examiner. In the event of a failed second attempt, further training will be mandated by the FRTOL Examiner.

Appeals

Regulation 6(5) of the CAA Regulations 1991 states that, 'Any person who has failed a test or examination which they are required to pass before they are granted or may exercise the privileges of a personal licence may, within 14 days after being notified of the failure, request that the Authority determine whether the test or examination was properly conducted.' Following the failure of any test the FRTOL Examiner shall explain the applicant's right of appeal.

Personal Electronic Devices (PED's)

The candidate is not permitted to bring PED's into the examination room during any of the FRTOL Practical Tests. Candidates who have been briefed and are waiting for test are not permitted access to PED's.

Further Reading

Civil Aviation Publication CAP 413 (Radiotelephony Manual),

CAP 1585e (Radiotelephony Examiner List),

CAA 5003 (Evidence of UK Examination and Test for grant of FRTOL),

SRG 1171 (FRTOL Practical Test Training – Record of Completion),

CAP 2118 (FRTOL Examiner Manual),

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

APPENDIX A: Practical Test – RTF Aide Memoire

STATION

AIRCRAFT CALLSIGN

REQUEST

< *PASS YOUR MESSAGE* >

C ALLSIGN

A IRCRAFT TYPE

R OUTE (FROM – TO)

P OSITION

A LTITUDE / HEIGHT / LEVEL + APS

I NTENTIONS / ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (FLIGHT RULES, TRACKING TO)

C ALLSIGN

P OSITION

T IME

A LTITUDE / HEIGHT / LEVEL

N EXT POSITION

E TA

MAYDAY x 3 or PAN PAN x 3

S TATION

C ALLSIGN

A IRCRAFT TYPE

N ATURE OF EMERGENCY

I NTENTIONS

P OSITION / LEVEL / HEADING

P ILOT QUALIFICATIONS

A NY OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION (POB, ENDURANCE etc.)

APPENDIX B: FRTOL Practical Test – CAA CANDIDATE BRIEF

Portable electronic devices (PED's) and cameras are NOT permitted in the examination room

The FRTOL Practical Test is a test of communication skills using standard phraseology and procedures.

Candidates are required to simulate flying the route indicated on the flight plan, transmitting all the required Radiotelephony calls on the appropriate frequencies.

The candidate will be expected to know when Radiotelephony transmissions are to be made and understand the nature of the information passed. The ability to interpret knowledge beyond that explained in CAP 413 and the communications element of the UK AIP will not be assessed.

Candidates are to note the following:

- The test shall be assessed in accordance with standard phraseology contained in the latest edition of CAP 413.
- The FRTOL Examiner will explain and demonstrate how to operate the testing platform.
- The candidate will be allocated time to plot the test route onto an aeronautical chart. Following a route brief by the FRTOL Examiner, the candidate is then allocated a further 20 minutes planning time to make notes for use in the test. The RTF Aide Memoire issued by the FRTOL Examiner can be used in the planning stage as well as the test.
- The FRTOL Examiner will play the role of an AGCS Radio Operator, FISO or ATCO. They will respond to calls made to their station as if it were a real-life flight.
- The test will start in accordance with the details contained within the Route Brief that has been presented by the FRTOL Examiner.
- At some stage during the test the candidate will be made aware of an emergency that may involve them, another aircraft, vehicle or vessel, person on board or within sight. The FRTOL Examiner will brief how the candidate will be made aware of the emergency and how the emergency will cease.
- The test may be carried out at the candidate's own pace with no requirement to wait the full time between transmission. However, the test must not take longer than the flight plan time stated on the Route Brief.
- A list of frequencies for communications facilities is provided. The candidate may not require all these frequencies. If a frequency or facility is not listed, it should not be required; however aeronautical information is always available from the FIR FIS frequency.
- After the candidate has completed the simulated flight test, the FRTOL Examiner will ask a number of additional assessable questions relating to the test route flown and/or the content of CAP 413 prior to the result being disclosed at the debrief.
- Questions regarding the content of the test, or what is required from the candidate should be asked prior to the test commencing.
- The FRTOL Examiner may interject at any time and reserves the right to terminate the test at any point.
- The Practical Test Route and its associated documentation must not have been disclosed to the candidate or Training provider prior to the start of the test.