

# FEDERAL AVIATION AGENCY

[ 14 CFR Part 67 ]

[ Docket No. 6900; Notice 65-22 ]

## DISTANT VISUAL ACUITY; FIRST- AND SECOND-CLASS MEDICAL CERTIFICATES

### Notice of Proposed Rule Making

The Federal Aviation Agency is considering amending Part 67 of the Federal Aviation Regulations to change the distant visual acuity requirement for an applicant for a first- or second-class medical certificate from at least 20/50 to 20/100 in each eye separately before correction.

Interested persons may participate in the making of the proposed rule by submitting such written data, views or arguments as they may desire. Communications should identify the regulatory docket or notice number and be submitted in duplicate to the Federal Aviation Agency, Office of the General Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket, 800 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, D.C., 20553. All communications received on or before October 14, 1965, will be considered by the Administrator before taking action on the proposed rule. The proposal contained in this notice may be changed in the light of comments received. All comments submitted will be available for examination in the Rules Docket before and after the closing date for comments.

Sections 67.13(b)(1) and 67.15(b)(1) of Part 67 of the Federal Aviation Regulations currently require an applicant for a first- or second-class medical certificate, respectively, to have distant visual acuity of at least 20/50 in each eye separately, before correction to 20/20 or better with corrective glasses. This standard has been in effect unchanged since 1938. Since that time, significant technological advances have occurred in design and performance of aircraft, and in the environment in which they are operated. Cockpits are no longer open for airline transport and commercial pilots, goggles are not needed, the interference of atmospheric conditions on visual functions has been lessened considerably, and modern aids to navigation make as near-perfect distant visual acuity less critical.

Except in cases of gross myopic conditions, applicants with uncorrected distant visual acuity less than that specified in the present standards generally have been allowed to show to the Federal Air Surgeon or his representatives, under

the provisions in § 67.19 of the Federal Aviation Regulations, whether they have been able to operate aircraft without endangering safety in air commerce despite that disqualification. The bulk of these cases have involved applicants whose uncorrected distant visual acuity was less than 20/50 but no less than 20/100. If these applicants have not had other major disturbances in visual functions, they almost invariably have been able to demonstrate favorably, and they have received special issue of medical certificates on an individual basis. This process has required applicants to seek special detailed evaluation of all aspects of their vision to assure that no previously unknown related visual problem, other than the defect in distant visual acuity, was present. These evaluations rarely have disclosed a previously unknown visual problem that would not allow special issuance of the certificate sought. The process has been expensive to the applicants, both in money expended for ophthalmological examinations, and in issuance delay time. It also has entailed considerable effort and time on the part of the Agency.

The Agency now desires to accommodate the distant visual acuity standard for first- and second-class medical certificates to current conditions, and to dispense with special testing that in the great majority of cases would result in the special issue of a certificate anyway, all without adverse effect upon safety. It therefore is proposed that an applicant be required to have distant visual acuity of at least 20/100 instead of the current 20/50 in each eye separately before correction, in order to allow a regular instead of a special issue of the applicable medical certificate.

In consideration of the foregoing, it is proposed to amend Part 67 of the Federal Aviation Regulations, as follows:

1. Paragraph (b)(1) of § 67.13 would be amended by striking out the figures "20/50" and inserting the figures "20/100" in place thereof.

2. Paragraph (b)(1) of § 67.15 would be amended by striking out the figures "20/50" and inserting the figures "20/100" in place thereof.

This amendment is proposed under the authority of sections 313(a), 601, and 602 of the Federal Aviation Act of 1958 (49 U.S.C. 1354, 1421, 1422).

Issued in Washington, D.C., on September 7, 1965.

M. S. WHITE, M.D.,  
Federal Air Surgeon.

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