



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

SAFO

Safety Alert for Operators

SAFO 10012
DATE: 7/6/10

Flight Standards Service
Washington, DC

http://www.faa.gov/other_visit/aviation_industry/airline_operators/airline_safety/safo

A SAFO contains important safety information and may include recommended action. SAFO content should be especially valuable to air carriers in meeting their statutory duty to provide service with the highest possible degree of safety in the public interest. Besides the specific action recommended in a SAFO, an alternative action may be as effective in addressing the safety issue named in the SAFO.

Subject: Possible Misinterpretation of the Practical Test Standards (PTS) Language “Minimal Loss of Altitude”

Purpose: To clarify the meaning of the approaches to stall evaluation criteria as it relates to “minimal loss of altitude” in the Airline Transport Pilot PTS.

Discussion: A recent survey of stall/stick pusher training programs revealed some inconsistencies in the practical application of the term “minimal loss of altitude”. Specifically, some programs inappropriately stress maintaining altitude during recovery or have arbitrarily assigned a predetermined value (in feet) as an evaluation criteria.

The term “minimal loss of altitude” was intended to take into account the many variables which could affect the amount of altitude loss encountered in a smooth recovery from an approach to stall. These variables may include, but are not limited to:

- Entry Altitude
- Aircraft Weight
- Density Altitude
- Bank Angle
- Aircraft Configuration

The reduction of angle of attack required to initiate recovery will likely result in altitude loss. The amount of altitude loss will be affected by the operational environment.

Operators and Training Centers are encouraged to ensure that their training program and checking modules are written and administered to ensure the evaluation criteria for a recovery from a stall or approach to stall does not mandate a predetermined value for altitude loss. Proper evaluation criteria should consider the multitude of external and internal variables which affect the recovery altitude. The aircraft manufacturer’s recommended stall recovery techniques and procedures take precedence and must be followed.

Recommended Action: Directors of Operations, Directors of Training, Training Center Managers, Check Pilots, Training Pilots, and flightcrews should be familiar with the content of this SAFO. They should work together to ensure that the content of this SAFO is provided to pilots during ground training, reinforced in flight training, and proficiency checks.

Contact: Questions or comments concerning this SAFO should be addressed to Robert Burke, Air Carrier Training Branch, AFS-210, via email at Robert.Burke@Faa.gov or via phone at (202) 267-8262.