



# Memorandum

**U.S. Department of  
Transportation**

Office of the Secretary  
of Transportation  
Office of Inspector General

Subject: **INFORMATION**: Audit Announcement –  
Review of FAA Oversight of Air Carrier Check  
Pilots  
Federal Aviation Administration  
Project No. 15A3016A000

Date: November 9, 2015

From: Matthew E. Hampton  
Assistant Inspector General  
for Aviation Audits

Reply to  
Attn. of: JA-10

To: Director, Audit and Evaluation

U.S. commercial airlines employ approximately 71,500 pilots who are responsible for the safe transport of more than 760 million passengers annually. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) plays an important role in ensuring that these pilots have the knowledge and skills to fly safely. To do so, FAA authorizes qualified air carrier employees to evaluate other pilots' flying proficiency. FAA must review the qualifications of check pilot candidates, oversee their performance, and ensure they meet recurrent training requirements. In addition, FAA authorizes a limited number of check pilots to act on behalf of the Agency to oversee pilot certifications and conduct check pilot observations.

While check pilots are critical to FAA's oversight of pilot safety, in 2011 our office found that FAA lacked standardized training for its inspectors on how to evaluate check pilots. In addition, we highlighted differences in the certification and renewal process of both positions.<sup>1</sup>

We are initiating an audit to follow up on our prior work because check pilots perform a majority of proficiency evaluations on pilots and are critical to ensuring pilots are well trained. Accordingly, our objective is to assess the effectiveness of FAA's processes for approving and overseeing air carrier check pilots.

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<sup>1</sup> *New Approaches Are Needed to Strengthen FAA Oversight of Air Carrier Training Programs and Pilot Performance* (OIG Report Number AV-2012-027), December 20, 2011. OIG reports are available on our Web site at <http://www.oig.dot.gov/>.

We plan to begin the audit this month and will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference. We will conduct our work at FAA Headquarters and regional offices as well as Flight Standards Service field offices that oversee commercial air carriers.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (202) 366-0500 or Tina Nysted, Program Director, at (404) 562-3770.

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cc: DOT Audit Liaison, M-1  
FAA Audit Liaison, AAE-100