

MODULE 13

FOR B2 CERTIFICATION

AIRCRAFT AERODYNAMICS STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS

Aviation Maintenance Technician Certification Series



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The publishers of this Aviation Maintenance Technician Certification Series welcome you to the world of aviation maintenance. As you move towards EASA certification, you are required to gain suitable knowledge and experience in your chosen area. Qualification on basic subjects for each aircraft maintenance license category or subcategory is accomplished in accordance with the following matrix. Where applicable, subjects are indicated by an "X" in the column below the license heading.

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REVISION LOG

VERSION	EFFECTIVE DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE
001	2016 01	Module Creation and Release
002	2017 02	Format Update
003	2017 08	Module 03 Revisions. Typo corrections in Sub-Modules 03, 04 and 08.
004	2020 02	Enhanced or modified content within the following Sub-Modules: Sub-Module 03: Added Autopilot Modes of Operation. Sub-Module 04: Reorganized based on Part-66 2018 changes; added content: ADS-B and Datalink; Corrected Figures 4-78 and 4-79. Sub-Module 07: Added Fly-By-Wire Failsafe and Fly-By-Wire operation.

AIRCRAFT AERODYNAMICS STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS

Welcome.....	iii
Revision Log	iii
Forward.....	iv
EASA License Category Chart	v
General Knowledge Requirements	v
Contents.....	xiii

SUB-MODULE 01 THEORY OF FLIGHT

Knowledge Requirements	1.1
13.1 - Aeroplane Aerodynamics And Flight Controls	1.2
Primary Flight Control Surfaces.....	1.2
Operation And Effect Of Roll Control Devices	1.2
Ailerons.....	1.2
Spoilers.....	1.4
Operation And Effect Of Pitch Control Devices	1.4
Elevators.....	1.4
Stabilators.....	1.5
Variable Incidence Stabilizers	1.5
Canards	1.5
Operation And Effect Of Yaw Control Devices	1.5
Rudders	1.5
Rudder Limiters.....	1.6
Secondary Or Auxiliary Control Surfaces	1.6
Operation And Effect Of Tabs	1.6
Trim Tabs	1.6
Balance Tabs.....	1.7
Servo Tabs	1.8
Anti-Servo/Anti-Balance Tabs.....	1.8
Control Surface Bias.....	1.8
High Lift Devices	1.9
Flaps.....	1.9
Flaperons.....	1.10
Slats.....	1.10
Slots.....	1.11
Elevons And Ruddervators	1.12
Drag Inducing Devices.....	1.12
Spoilers.....	1.12
Speed Brakes.....	1.12
High Speed Flight	1.12
Speed Of Sound	1.12
Mach Number, Subsonic, Transonic And	
Supersonic Flight	1.12
Shock Wave.....	1.13
Critical Mach Number	1.14

Rotary Wing Aerodynamics 1.14

Terminology 1.14

 Rotary Wing Aircraft Configuration 1.14

 Flight Conditions..... 1.15

 Hovering Flight..... 1.15

 Vertical Flight..... 1.16

 Forward Flight

 Autorotation

 Operation And Effect Of Rotorcraft Controls

 Flight Controls Configuration

 Swash Plate Assembly

 Collective Pitch Control..... 1.18

 Throttle Control

 Governor/Correlator

 Cyclic Pitch Control..... 1.19

 Antitorque Pedals..... 1.20

 Questions

 Answers..... 1.22

SUB-MODULE 02

STRUCTURES — GENERAL CONCEPTS

Knowledge Requirements

13.2 - Fundamentals Of Structural Systems

 Structural Classification

 Primary Structure

 Secondary Structure..... 2.2

 Tertiary Structure

 Structural Stresses..... 2.2

 Construction Methods..... 2.3

 Fuselage

 Wing, Empennage And Engine Attachment

 Aircraft Construction..... 2.4

 System Installation Provisions

 Station Identification And Zonal Location Systems

 Station Numbering..... 2.6

 Zonal Identification System

 Access And Inspection Panels..... 2.9

 Lightening Strike Protection and Bonding

 Questions

 Answers..... 2.12

SUB-MODULE 03

AUTOFLIGHT (ATA 22)

Knowledge Requirements

13.3 - Autoflight

 Section A..... 3.2

 Fundamentals Of Automatic Flight Control

CONTENTS

Introduction	3.2	Weather Minima Vs All Weather Operations.....	3.19																																																																																																																										
Basic Architecture Of AFSC.....	3.3	Modes Of Operation.....	3.20																																																																																																																										
Robustness Of AFCS	3.3	Take-Off Mode	3.20																																																																																																																										
Command Signal Processing.....	3.3	Speed Control Mode.....	3.21																																																																																																																										
Basic Types Of AFSC.....	3.3	Go-Around Mode.....	3.21																																																																																																																										
Trimmed Flight Holding.....	3.3	System Monitors And Failure Conditions	3.22																																																																																																																										
Stability Augmentation System (SAS).....	3.4	Limited Applications of Safety Devices.....	3.22																																																																																																																										
Command Augmentation System (CAS)	3.5	Solution-System Redundancy	3.22																																																																																																																										
Super Augmentation	3.5	Fail-soft	3.22																																																																																																																										
AFCS Interface And Signal Processing	3.6	Fail-operational	3.22																																																																																																																										
Autopilot Modes Of Operation.....	3.7	Simplex.....	3.22																																																																																																																										
Pitch Mode (altitude hold) - Basic Mode	3.7	Multiplex	3.22																																																																																																																										
Vertical Speed Mode (V/S) – Basic Mode	3.7	Duplex System.....	3.22																																																																																																																										
Altitude Hold Mode (ATL HLD) - Superior Mode ..	3.7	Triplex System	3.22																																																																																																																										
Altitude Acquisition Mode (ALT/S or ALT ACQ)		Superior Mode	3.8	Duplicate-monitored	3.23	Yaw Damper	3.8	Dual-dual	3.23	Yaw Damper Coupler.....	3.8	Monitoring	3.23	Yaw Damper Engage Switch	3.8	Comparison monitor (or Comparator)	3.23	Warning Annunciator.....	3.8	Equalizer	3.23	Yaw Damper Rudder Position Indicator.....	3.8	Automatic Landing Sequence	3.23	Rudder Position Transducers	3.9	Questions	3.25	Rudder Transfer and Solenoid Valves	3.10	Answers.....	3.26	Yaw Damper Operation	3.10	Stability Augmentation System In Helicopters.....	3.10	SAS Components.....	3.10	SAS Operation.....	3.12	Automatic Trim Control	3.12	Introduction	3.12	Working Of Automatic Stabilizer Trim System.....	3.12	Trim Potentiometer	3.14	Sensor	3.14	Feedback Unit.....	3.14	Limit Switches.....	3.14	Autopilot Navigation Aids Interface	3.14	Instrument Landing System	3.14	Localizer Element.....	3.15	Glide Path Element	3.16	Indicating Element	3.16	Marker Beacon.....	3.17	Section B	3.17	Auto-Throttle Systems.....	3.17	Automatic Landing Systems	3.18	Importance of Control	3.19	Modification in Automatic Landing.....	3.19	Weather Minima	3.19	Categories	3.19	Weather Minima Vs All Weather Operations.....	3.19	Modes Of Operation.....	3.20	Take-Off Mode	3.20	Speed Control Mode.....	3.21	Go-Around Mode.....	3.21	System Monitors And Failure Conditions	3.22	Limited Applications of Safety Devices.....	3.22	Solution-System Redundancy	3.22	Fail-soft	3.22	Fail-operational	3.22	Simplex.....	3.22	Multiplex	3.22	Duplex System.....	3.22	Triplex System	3.22	Duplicate-monitored	3.23	Dual-dual	3.23	Monitoring	3.23	Comparison monitor (or Comparator)	3.23	Equalizer	3.23	Automatic Landing Sequence	3.23	Questions	3.25	Answers.....	3.26
Superior Mode	3.8	Duplicate-monitored	3.23																																																																																																																										
Yaw Damper	3.8	Dual-dual	3.23																																																																																																																										
Yaw Damper Coupler.....	3.8	Monitoring	3.23																																																																																																																										
Yaw Damper Engage Switch	3.8	Comparison monitor (or Comparator)	3.23																																																																																																																										
Warning Annunciator.....	3.8	Equalizer	3.23																																																																																																																										
Yaw Damper Rudder Position Indicator.....	3.8	Automatic Landing Sequence	3.23																																																																																																																										
Rudder Position Transducers	3.9	Questions	3.25																																																																																																																										
Rudder Transfer and Solenoid Valves	3.10	Answers.....	3.26																																																																																																																										
Yaw Damper Operation	3.10																																																																																																																												
Stability Augmentation System In Helicopters.....	3.10																																																																																																																												
SAS Components.....	3.10																																																																																																																												
SAS Operation.....	3.12																																																																																																																												
Automatic Trim Control	3.12																																																																																																																												
Introduction	3.12																																																																																																																												
Working Of Automatic Stabilizer Trim System.....	3.12																																																																																																																												
Trim Potentiometer	3.14																																																																																																																												
Sensor	3.14																																																																																																																												
Feedback Unit.....	3.14																																																																																																																												
Limit Switches.....	3.14																																																																																																																												
Autopilot Navigation Aids Interface	3.14																																																																																																																												
Instrument Landing System	3.14																																																																																																																												
Localizer Element.....	3.15																																																																																																																												
Glide Path Element	3.16																																																																																																																												
Indicating Element	3.16																																																																																																																												
Marker Beacon.....	3.17																																																																																																																												
Section B	3.17																																																																																																																												
Auto-Throttle Systems.....	3.17																																																																																																																												
Automatic Landing Systems	3.18																																																																																																																												
Importance of Control	3.19																																																																																																																												
Modification in Automatic Landing.....	3.19																																																																																																																												
Weather Minima	3.19																																																																																																																												
Categories	3.19																																																																																																																												
Weather Minima Vs All Weather Operations.....	3.19																																																																																																																												
Modes Of Operation.....	3.20																																																																																																																												
Take-Off Mode	3.20																																																																																																																												
Speed Control Mode.....	3.21																																																																																																																												
Go-Around Mode.....	3.21																																																																																																																												
System Monitors And Failure Conditions	3.22																																																																																																																												
Limited Applications of Safety Devices.....	3.22																																																																																																																												
Solution-System Redundancy	3.22																																																																																																																												
Fail-soft	3.22																																																																																																																												
Fail-operational	3.22																																																																																																																												
Simplex.....	3.22																																																																																																																												
Multiplex	3.22																																																																																																																												
Duplex System.....	3.22																																																																																																																												
Triplex System	3.22																																																																																																																												
Duplicate-monitored	3.23																																																																																																																												
Dual-dual	3.23																																																																																																																												
Monitoring	3.23																																																																																																																												
Comparison monitor (or Comparator)	3.23																																																																																																																												
Equalizer	3.23																																																																																																																												
Automatic Landing Sequence	3.23																																																																																																																												
Questions	3.25																																																																																																																												
Answers.....	3.26																																																																																																																												

SUB-MODULE 04

COMMUNICATION/NAVIGATION (ATA 23/34)

Knowledge Requirements	4.1
13.4 - Communication/Navigation	4.2
Section A.....	4.2
Fundamentals Of Radio wave Propagation.....	4.2
Wave Theory	4.2
Transverse Waves.....	4.2
Longitudinal (Compressional) Waves	4.3
Basic Wave Terminology	4.3
Amplitude (A)	4.3
Wave Length (λ)	4.3
Frequency (f)	4.4
Wave Period (T).....	4.4
Wave Front	4.5
Rays	4.5
Electromagnetic Waves.....	4.5
Electromagnetic Spectrum	4.6
Radio Waves	4.6
Radio Wave Generation.....	4.7
Radio Frequency Spectrum	4.8
High Frequency (Hf) Band.....	4.8
Very High Frequency (VHF) Band	4.8
Ultra High Frequency (UHF) Band	4.8

Modulation	4.8
Radio Carrier.....	4.9
Amplitude Modulation	4.10
Frequency Modulation	4.12
Modulation Index And Deviation Ratio.....	4.13
Bandwidth.....	4.14
Single Side Band (SSB)	4.15
Phase Modulation	4.16
Radio Wave Propagation	4.17
Antennas	4.18
Antenna Length.....	4.18
Polarization, Directivity, and Field Pattern	4.19
Antenna Types	4.20
Transmission Lines	4.21
Radio Transmitters And Receivers.....	4.22
Transmitters	4.22
Receivers.....	4.22
Transceiver.....	4.23
Very High Frequency (Vhf) Communication.....	4.23
VHF Transceiver	4.24
Operational Mode	4.24
Maintenance Mode	4.24
Power-On Self Test (POST).....	4.24
Continuous Monitoring	4.25
VHF Standby Control Panel	4.25
VHF Antenna.....	4.25
Audio And Radio Control Display Unit (ARCDU)	4.25
High Frequency (Hf) Communication	4.26
Audio Systems	4.28
Aircraft Voice Communications	4.28
Audio Integration System (AIS).....	4.30
Remote Control Audio Unit (RCAU)	4.30
Audio Control Panel (ACP)	4.31
INT/RAD Switch	4.31
Flight Compartment Speaker.....	4.31
Hand Microphone	4.31
Jack Box Console (Flight Compartment, Observer, Ground).....	4.32
Push-To-Talk (PTT) Switch	4.32
Cabin Attendant Handset.....	4.33
Cabin Intercommunication Data System (CIDS)	4.34
Passenger Address (PA)	4.34
Cabin Inter-phone	4.34
Service Inter-Phone	4.34
Crew Signaling And Alerting.....	4.34
Emergency Locater Transmitter (ELT)	4.34
Cockpit Voice Recorders	4.37
Post-Crash Cvr/Fdr Unit Recovery	4.38
Post-Crash Data Recovery.....	4.38
Very High Frequency Omni-directional Range (VOR).....	4.40
Automatic Direction Finding (ADF)	4.43
Instrument Landing Systems (ILS)	4.46
Localizer	4.46
Glideslope	4.46
Compass Locators.....	4.47
Marker Beacons	4.48
Flight Director Systems (FDS)	4.49
Distance Measuring Equipment (DME)	4.51
Area Navigation (RNAV).....	4.52
Flight Management System (FMS)	4.53
Global Positioning System (GPS)	4.54
Wide Area Augmentation System (WAAS)	4.55
Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS).....	4.55
GNSS Operational Elements.....	4.56
Data Link	4.57
Controller Pilot Data Link Communications (CPDLC)	4.58
Section B	4.58
Air Traffic Control Transponder.....	4.58
Primary Surveillance Radar (PSR)	4.58
Secondary Surveillance Radar (SSR).....	4.58
Mode A and C Interrogation and Reply	4.59
Mode S.....	4.59
Transponder Tests and Inspections.....	4.60
Guidelines For All Transponder Testing	
Includes:	4.61
Altitude Encoders.....	4.61
Traffic Alert And Collision Avoidance System (TCAS)	4.62
Weather Radar	4.63
Radio Altimeter.....	4.65
ADS-B	4.67
Section C	4.69
Microwave Landing System (MLS).....	4.69
Operational Functions	4.70
Azimuth Guidance	4.70
Glideslope Guidance.....	4.72
Airborne Equipment.....	4.72
Very Low Frequency And Hyperbolic Navigation (VLF/OMEGA)	4.72
Doppler Navigation	4.73
Doppler Radar	4.74
Inertial Navigation System (INS)	4.74

CONTENTS

Aircraft Communication Addressing And Reporting System (ACARS)	4.76
Communication And Navigation Avionics Installations	4.77
Questions	4.79
Answers.....	4.80

SUB-MODULE 05

ELECTRICAL POWER (ATA 24)

Knowledge Requirements	5.1
13.5 - Electrical Power.....	5.2
Batteries.....	5.2
Primary Cell Batteries	5.2
Secondary Cell Batteries.....	5.2
Dry Charged (Flooded) Lead Acid Batteries.....	5.3
Valve-Regulated (Sealed) Lead-Acid Batteries (VRLA)	5.3
Nickel Cadmium (NiCd) Batteries	5.3
Lithium Ion Batteries.....	5.4
Battery Installations and Operation.....	5.5
AC Power Generation.....	5.6
AC Alternators	5.8
Alternator Drive	5.10
AC Alternators Control Systems.....	5.11
DC Power Generation	5.13
Functions of Generator Control Systems	5.14
Voltage Regulation.....	5.14
Over-voltage Protection.....	5.15
Parallel Generator Operations	5.15
Over-Excitation Protection.....	5.15
Differential Voltage.....	5.15
Reverse Current Sensing.....	5.15
Generator Controls for High Output Generators	5.15
Other Voltage Regulation	5.16
Carbon Pile Regulators.....	5.16
Three-Unit Regulators	5.16
DC Alternators and Controls.....	5.18
DC Alternators.....	5.19
DC Alternator Voltage Regulation.....	5.20
Solid State Voltage Regulators	5.20
Power Distribution.....	5.21
Power Distribution on Small Multi-engine Aircraft ...	5.21
Power Distribution on Large Aircraft.....	5.23
Split Bus Systems	5.23
Parallel Bus Systems	5.24
Split-Parallel Systems.....	5.26
Inverters, Transformers and Rectifiers.....	5.27

Inverters.....	5.27
Permanent Magnet Rotary Inverter	5.27
Inductor-Type Rotary Inverter	5.27
Static Inverters	5.28
Transformers.....	5.32
Current Transformers	5.35
Transformer Losses.....	5.35
Power in Transformers.....	5.35
Rectifiers.....	5.35
Silicon Controlled Rectifiers.....	5.37
Transformer Rectifiers.....	5.38
Circuit Protection	5.39
Current Limiting Devices	5.39
Fuses	5.39
Circuit Breakers.....	5.40
Emergency Power Generation	5.40
Standby Power.....	5.40
External/Ground Power	5.41
Questions	5.43
Answers.....	5.44

SUB-MODULE 06

EQUIPMENT AND FURNISHINGS (ATA 25)

Knowledge Requirements	6.1
13.6 - Emergency Equipment Requirements.....	6.2
Emergency Lighting	6.3
Seats, Harnesses and Belts.....	6.3
Seats.....	6.3
Seat Belts and Harnesses	6.4
Cabin Lay-Out.....	6.4
Equipment Lay-Out	6.5
Cabin Furnishing Installation.....	6.6
Cabin Entertainment Equipment	6.6
In-Flight Entertainment	6.6
Current Generation IFE	6.6
Safety Considerations for IFE.....	6.6
Multiplexing	6.7
Fibre Optics.....	6.7
Galley Installation	6.7
Cargo Handling and Retention Equipment	6.8
Airstairs	6.9
Questions	6.11
Answers.....	6.12

SUB-MODULE 07

FLIGHT CONTROLS (ATA 27)

Knowledge Requirements	7.1
------------------------------	-----

13.7 - Flight Controls (ATA 27)	7.2	Navigation Instruments.....	8.3
Primary Flight Controls.....	7.2	The Atmosphere.....	8.3
Secondary Flight Controls	7.2	Characteristics Of The Atmosphere	8.4
Trim Controls.....	7.2	Pressure.....	8.4
Active Load Control.....	7.4	Density	8.4
High Lift Devices	7.5	Humidity	8.5
Lift Dump And Speed Brakes	7.5	Temperature And Altitude.....	8.6
Control System Operation	7.6	International Standard Atmosphere.....	8.7
Mechanical Control.....	7.6	Pressure Measuring Devices And Systems	8.7
Control Cables.....	7.7	Pressure References	8.8
Push-Pull Tubes	7.7	Absolute Pressure.....	8.8
Bellcranks And Levers	7.7	Differential Pressure	8.8
Jackscrews.....	7.8	Gauge Pressure	8.8
Torque Tubes	7.8	Pressure Measurements (Mechanical)	8.8
Hydromechanical Control	7.8	Bourdon Tube	8.9
Electrical And Electronic Controls.....	7.9	Diaphragm	8.9
Pneumatic	7.9	Capsules	8.10
Artificial Feel	7.10	Bellows.....	8.10
Yaw Damper	7.11	Pressure Sensation and Transmission (Electrical).....	8.10
Mach Trim	7.11	Pressure Switches.....	8.11
Rudder Limiter.....	7.11	Potentiometric Pressure Sensor.....	8.11
Gust Lock Systems.....	7.12	Piezoresistive Devices	8.12
Protection/Warning Systems.....	7.12	Wheatstone Bridge	8.12
Section B	7.13	Piezoelectric Devices	8.13
Fly-By-Wire Control.....	7.13	Capacitance Discharge Sensor.....	8.13
Fly-by-wire Redundancy/Fail Safe	7.14	Pressure Measurement Accuracy	8.14
Operation of a Fly-By-Wire Hydraulic Aileron		Static	8.14
Actuator	7.14	Linearity/Non-Linearity.....	8.15
Normal Operation With The Servo Control		Hysteresis.....	8.15
Pressurized	7.14	Repeatability	8.15
Servocontrol In The Active Mode	7.15	Thermal.....	8.15
Servocontrol In The Damping Mode:	7.15	Pitot-Static System	8.15
Operation After A Hydraulic Failure	7.15	Pitot Tube.....	8.15
Operation After An Electrical Failure	7.15	Static Ports	8.17
Maintenance And Rigging.....	7.15	Multifunction Probes.....	8.17
Fly-By-Optics	7.15	Altimeters	8.18
Fly-By-Wireless	7.15	Triple Pointer Display Altimeter	8.18
Questions	7.17	Counter (Drum) Type Altimeter	8.19
Answers.....	7.18	Servo Assisted Altimeter	8.19
SUB-MODULE 08		Digital Display Altimeter	8.21
INSTRUMENTS (ATA 31)		Cabin Altimeter/Differential Gauge	8.21
Knowledge Requirements	8.1	Factors Affecting Altitude Readings	8.22
13.8 - Aircraft Instrumentation.....	8.2	Air Pressure Variation	8.22
Classifications Of Aircraft Instruments.....	8.2	QNE (AA/Altitude Airways-Flight Level).....	8.23
Flight Instruments.....	8.2	QFE (Q-Code Field Elevation)/AGL.....	8.23
Engine Instruments.....	8.3	QNH (Q-Code Nautical Height)/MSL	8.23
		Temperature Variation.....	8.24

CONTENTS

Scale Error	8.24	Directional Systems (MEMS)	8.46
Position Error	8.25	Attitude Heading And Reference Systems	8.46
System Leaks.....	8.25	Common Gyroscopic Instruments.....	8.47
Altimeter Serviceability Checks.....	8.25	Vacuum-Driven Attitude Gyros.....	8.47
Important Altitude Terminologies	8.25	Electric Attitude Indicators.....	8.48
Mean Sea Level.....	8.25	Gyroscopic Direction Indicator Or	
Aerodrome Elevation	8.25	Directional Gyro (DG)	8.49
Indicated Altitude	8.26	Turn Coordinators.....	8.49
Absolute Altitude	8.26	Turn-And-Slip Indicator	8.49
True Altitude	8.26	Terrain Awareness And Warning System	
Height	8.26	(GPWS & EGPWS)	8.51
Pressure Altitude	8.26	Ground Proximity Warning System (GPWS)	8.51
Density Altitude	8.26	Mode Annunciations	8.51
Calibrated Altitude	8.26	System Description	8.52
Transition Altitude	8.26	GPWC	8.52
Transition Level.....	8.27	Warning Lights.....	8.52
Transition Layer.....	8.27	Ground Proximity Pull Up Light (RED)	8.52
Vertical Speed Indicator	8.27	Flap, Gear Light, Switch Ground Proximity,	
Instrument Lag	8.27	Glide Scope, Inhibit Light Switch.....	8.52
Variometer.....	8.28	Ground Proximity Flap Override Light, Switch	
Digital Rate-of-Climb Indicators	8.28	And Gear Override Switch.....	8.52
Airspeed Indicator.....	8.28	Warning Lights Gpws Control Panel	8.52
Machmeter	8.29	B-777 GPWS Control Panel INOP Light	8.52
Air Data Computers (ADC) And Digital Air Data		Mode 1 - Large or Excessive Descent Rate	8.52
Computers (DADC)	8.30	Mode 2 - Excessive Closure Rate.....	8.52
Temperature Indicating System	8.31	Mode 2B - Excessive Closure Rate	8.52
Non-Electric Temperature Indicators	8.31	Mode 3- Descent After Take Off.....	8.52
Electrical Temperature Measuring Indication	8.32	Mode 4	8.53
Electrical Resistance Thermometer.....	8.33	Mode 5	8.53
Ratiometer Electrical Resistance Thermometers	8.34	Descent Below Glideslope - Descent Below GS	8.53
Thermocouple Temperature Indicators	8.35	Mode 6	8.54
Turbine Gas Temperature Indicating Systems	8.36	Mode 7	8.54
Total Air Temperature Measurement	8.37	Wind Shear	8.54
Fuel Quantity Indicating Systems	8.40	Fault Annunciation	8.56
Ratiometer-Type	8.40	EGPWS	8.56
Capacitance-Type	8.40	Terrain Clearance Floor (TCF)	8.56
Mechanical-Type	8.42	Direction Indicating Instruments	8.56
Ultrasonic-Type	8.42	Direct Indicating Magnetic Compass	8.57
Gyroscopic Instruments	8.42	Vertical Magnetic Compass	8.59
Sources Of Power For Gyroscopic Instruments	8.42	Remote Indicating Compass	8.59
Pressure-Driven Gyroscopic Instrument Systems.....	8.43	Remote Indicating Slaved Gyro Compass	8.59
Electrically-Driven Gyroscopic Instruments	8.43	Flux Gate Compass.....	8.59
Principles Of Gyroscopic Instruments	8.43	Solid State Magnetometers	8.60
Mechanical Gyros	8.43	Flight Data Recorder (FDR)	8.60
Solid State Gyros And Related Systems	8.45	Description	8.60
Ring Laser Gyros (RLG)	8.45	ICAO Requirements	8.61
Microelectromechanical Based Attitude And		Objective	8.62

History	8.62	Fault Classification	10.4
Principles Of Operation.....	8.63	Built-In Test Equipment (BITE)	10.4
Current Survivability Standards	8.63	Multifunction Control Display Unit (MCDU)	10.5
Electronic Displays	8.64	Aircraft Communications Addressing And Reporting System (ACARS)	10.6
Electronic Flight Instrument System	8.64	Data Loading Systems.....	10.6
Engine Indication And Crew Alerting System (EICAS)	8.66	Electronic Library System.....	10.8
Electronic Instrument Computing Systems.....	8.69	Printing.....	10.9
Stall Warning And Angle Of Attack (AOA) Indicators .	8.72	Structure Monitoring	10.10
Vibration Measurement And Indication	8.74	Questions	10.13
Vibration Measurement And Indication	8.74	Answers.....	10.14
Instrument Warning System.....	8.75		
Warning And Indicating Lights	8.75		
Warning Lights.....	8.76		
Caution Lights	8.76		
Indicating Or Advisory Lights	8.77		
Magnetic Indicators.....	8.77		
Central Warning Systems	8.78		
Glass Cockpit.....	8.79		
Questions	8.81		
Answers.....	8.82		
SUB-MODULE 09			
LIGHTS (ATA 33)			
Knowledge Requirements	9.1	Air Conditioning Systems	11.3
13.9 - Aircraft Lighting Systems	9.2	Air Cycle Air Conditioning	11.4
Exterior Lights	9.2	System Operation.....	11.4
Navigation / Position Lights.....	9.2	Pneumatic System Supply	11.4
Anti-Collision Lights	9.2	Component Operation.....	11.6
Landing Lights	9.3	Pack Valve.....	11.6
Taxi Lights.....	9.4	Bleed Air Bypass	11.6
Wing Ice Inspection Lights	9.4	Primary Heat Exchanger.....	11.6
Interior Lights	9.4	Refrigeration Turbine Unit or Air Cycle Machine And Secondary Heat Exchanger	11.7
Flight Deck/Control Cabin Lighting.....	9.4	Water Separator.....	11.7
Passenger Cabin Lights.....	9.5	Refrigeration Bypass Valve.....	11.7
Cargo Compartment Lighting	9.6	Vapor Cycle Air Conditioning	11.8
Emergency Lighting.....	9.6	Theory Of Refrigeration	11.8
Questions	9.7	Basic Vapor Cycle.....	11.11
Answers.....	9.8	Vapor Cycle Air Conditioning System Components	11.12
SUB-MODULE 10			
ON BOARD MAINTENANCE SYSTEMS (ATA 45)			
Knowledge Requirements	10.1	Refrigerant.....	11.12
13.10 - On Board Maintenance Systems (ATA 45)	10.2	Receiver Dryer.....	11.13
Central Maintenance Systems (CMS)	10.2	Expansion Valve	11.13
Central Maintenance Computer (CMC)	10.3	Evaporator	11.15
		Compressor.....	11.15
		Condenser.....	11.17
		Service Valves	11.17
		Air Conditioning Servicing.....	11.18
		Manifold Set, Gauges, Hoses, And Fittings	11.18
		Air Conditioning Service	11.20

CONTENTS

Refrigerant Source	11.20
Vacuum Pumps	11.21
Leak Detectors.....	11.21
System Servicing.....	11.22
Visual Inspection	11.22
Leak Test.....	11.23
Performance Test.....	11.23
Feel Test	11.23
Purging the System	11.23
Checking Compressor Oil	11.24
Evacuating The System	11.24
Charging The System.....	11.24
Distribution Systems	11.25
Flow Control	11.25
Temperature Control.....	11.27
Humidity Control	11.27
Pressurization.....	11.27
Pressure Of The Atmosphere	11.27
Temperature And Altitude.....	11.29
Pressurization Terms	11.30
Pressurization Systems	11.31
Control Of Cabin Pressure.....	11.32
Pressurization Modes.....	11.32
Cabin Pressure Controllers.....	11.33
Control Valve (Outflow Valve)	11.34
Cabin Air Pressure Safety Valve Operation	11.34
Pressurization Indication.....	11.36
Pressurization Operation.....	11.36
Cabin Pressurization Troubleshooting	11.37
Safety And Warning Devices.....	11.38
Protection And Warning Devices.....	11.38
Questions	11.39
Answers.....	11.40
SUB-MODULE 12	
FIRE PROTECTION (ATA 26)	
Knowledge Requirements	12.1
13.12 - Fire Protection (ATA 26)	12.2
Requirements For Fire To Occur	12.2
Classes Of Fires.....	12.2
Fire Zones	12.2
Fire Prevention.....	12.3
Fire Detection and Warning Systems	12.3
Requirements For Overheat And Fire Detection Systems.....	12.3
Thermal Switch Systems	12.3
Thermocouple Systems.....	12.4
Continuous-Loop Systems.....	12.5
Fenwal System.....	12.5
Kidde System.....	12.5
Temperature Trend Indication	12.6
Pressure Type Sensor Responder Systems	12.8
Pneumatic Continuous-Loop Systems	12.8
Smoke, Flame, and Carbon Monoxide Detection Systems	12.9
Smoke Detectors	12.9
Light Refraction Type	12.9
Ionization Type	12.9
Flame Detectors.....	12.10
Carbon Monoxide Detectors	12.10
Fire Extinguishing Systems	12.11
Fire Extinguisher Agents.....	12.11
Fixed Container Fire Extinguishing Systems	12.12
Containers	12.12
Discharge Valves	12.13
Pressure Indication	12.13
Two-Way Check Valve	12.14
Discharge Indicators.....	12.14
Fire Switch	12.14
Fixed Fire Protection: Cargo Compartments.....	12.15
Cargo Compartment Classification	12.15
Cargo Compartment Fire Protection And Warning	12.16
Fixed Fire Protection: Lavatories	12.17
Lavatory Smoke Detector And Warning Systems	12.17
Lavatory Fire Extinguisher Systems	12.17
Fire Detection System Maintenance	12.18
Fire Detection System Troubleshooting	12.20
Fire Extinguisher System Maintenance	12.21
Container Pressure Check	12.21
Discharge Cartridges.....	12.21
Agent Containers.....	12.21
Portable Fire Extinguishers.....	12.22
Portable Extinguisher Types	12.22
Questions	12.23
Answers.....	12.24
SUB-MODULE 13	
FUEL SYSTEMS (ATA 28)	
Knowledge Requirements	13.1
13.13 - Basic Fuel Systems Requirements (ATA 28)	13.2
Fuel System Independence.....	13.2
Fuel System Lightning Protection	13.2
Fuel Flow	13.2

Flow Between Interconnected Tanks.....	13.2	SUB-MODULE 14	
Unusable Fuel Supply	13.3	HYDRAULIC POWER (ATA 29)	
Fuel System Hot Weather Operation.....	13.3	Knowledge Requirements	14.1
Fuel Tanks	13.3	13.14 - Hydraulic Power (ATA 29).....	14.2
Pressure Fueling Systems	13.3	System Layout.....	14.2
Fuel Pumps.....	13.3	Open-Center Hydraulic Systems	14.2
Fuel System Lines And Fittings.....	13.4	Closed-Center Hydraulic Systems	14.3
Aircraft Fuel System Layout.....	13.4	Evolution Of Hydraulic Systems	14.3
Fuel Tanks.....	13.4	Hydraulic Power Pack System.....	14.3
Fuel Supply Systems.....	13.6	Modern High Performance Systems	14.4
Fuel Feed	13.6	Hydraulic Fluid.....	14.4
Cross-Feed And Transfer Systems.....	13.6	Types Of Hydraulic Fluids	14.5
Fuel Dumping, Venting And Draining.....	13.6	Health And Handling	14.5
Fuel System Drains	13.6	Hydraulic Reservoirs And Accumulators	14.5
Fuel Vent Systems.....	13.6	Reservoirs	14.5
Fuel Jettisoning System	13.8	Pressurized Reservoirs.....	14.6
Fuel System Components	13.8	Accumulators	14.6
Fuel Lines And Fittings	13.8	Hydraulic Pressure Generation	14.7
Fuel Valves.....	13.8	Mechanical, Electrical And Pneumatic-Driven Pumps ..	14.7
Manually-Operated Gate Valves.....	13.9	Hand Pumps.....	14.8
Motor-Operated Valves.....	13.9	Classification Of Pumps	14.9
Solenoid-Operated Valves	13.9	Constant-Displacement Pumps.....	14.9
Fuel Pumps	13.9	Gear-Type Power Pump	14.9
Fuel Filters.....	13.9	Gerotor Pump.....	14.10
Fuel Indication And Warnings.....	13.9	Piston Pumps.....	14.10
Fuel Quantity Indicating Systems.....	13.10	Bent Axis Piston Pump	14.10
Ratiometer Type	13.10	Inline Piston Pump	14.11
Capacitance Type.....	13.10	Vane Pump	14.11
Mechanical Type	13.12	Variable-Displacement Pumps	14.12
Fuel Flowmeters.....	13.12	Basic Pumping Operation	14.12
Fuel Temperature Gauges.....	13.13	Normal Pumping Mode	14.13
Fuel Heaters	13.14	Depressurized Mode.....	14.14
Fuel Pressure Gauges	13.15	Emergency Pressure Generation.....	14.15
Pressure Warning Signal	13.15	Ram Air Turbine (RAT).....	14.15
Valve-In-Transit Indicator Lights	13.16	Hydraulic Motors	14.15
Refueling and Defueling.....	13.16	Power Transfer Units (PTUS).....	14.16
Fueling.....	13.17	Hydraulic Motor Driven Generators (HMDGS).....	14.17
Over The Wing Refueling.....	13.17	Pressure Control	14.17
Pressure Refueling.....	13.17	Relief Valves	14.17
Defueling.....	13.17	Pressure Regulators	14.18
Fire Hazards When Fueling or Defueling.....	13.18	Pressure Reducers	14.18
Longitudinal Balance Systems.....	13.18	Power Distribution.....	14.19
Questions	13.19	Shutoff Valves	14.19
Answers.....	13.20	Selector Valves	14.19
		Check Valves	14.20
		Sequence Valves.....	14.20
		Priority Valves	14.20

CONTENTS

Shuttle Valves	14.21
Quick Disconnect Valves.....	14.21
Hydraulic Fuses.....	14.21
Other Hydraulic System Components.....	14.21
Hydraulic Actuators	14.21
Filters.....	14.21
Hydraulic Indicating and Warning.....	14.21
Interface With Other Systems	14.22
Questions	14.25
Answers.....	14.26
SUB-MODULE 15	
ICE AND RAIN PROTECTION (ATA 30)	
Knowledge Requirements	15.1
13.15 - Ice and Rain Protection (ATA 30)	15.2
Ice Formation, Classification, and Effects.....	15.2
Icing Effects.....	15.2
Ice Detection.....	15.3
Anti-Ice Versus De-ice.....	15.4
Anti-Icing Systems.....	15.6
Thermal Pneumatic Anti-Icing	15.6
Wing Anti-Ice (WAI) System	15.6
Slat Leading Edges	15.8
WAI Operation.....	15.8
WAI Control.....	15.8
WAI Indication System.....	15.11
WAI System BITE Test.....	15.11
Engine Anti-Ice (EAI)	15.12
Thermal Electric Anti-Icing	15.12
Probe Anti-Ice	15.12
Water System And Drain Anti-Ice.....	15.14
Windshield Anti-Ice	15.15
Propeller Anti-Ice	15.16
Chemical Anti-Icing	15.17
Ground Applied Anti-Ice	15.17
De-Icing Systems	15.19
Pneumatic De-Ice Boots.....	15.19
Construction and Installation of Deice Boots	15.19
Sources of Operating Air.....	15.19
Turbine Engine Bleed Air.....	15.19
Reciprocating Engine Aircraft	15.20
De-ice Systems.....	15.20
System Operation	15.20
Deice System for Turboprop Aircraft	15.21
De-icing System Components	15.22
Wet-Type Engine-Driven Air Pump	15.23
Dry Type Engine Driven Air Pump	15.23
Oil Separator	15.24
Control Valve.....	15.24
Deflate Valve	15.24
Distributor Valve	15.25
Timer/Control Unit.....	15.25
Regulators and Relief Valves	15.25
Manifold Assembly	15.26
Inlet Filter	15.26
Inspection, Maintenance, and Troubleshooting	
Of Rubber De-icer Boot Systems	15.26
Operational Checks.....	15.26
Adjustments.....	15.27
Troubleshooting.....	15.27
Inspection	15.29
Deice Boot Maintenance.....	15.29
Electrical De-Icing Systems	15.29
Electric Propeller De-ice	15.29
Electric Airfoil De-Ice Boots.....	15.29
Hot Air De-Ice/De-Fog.....	15.29
Chemical De-Ice Systems.....	15.30
Windshield Chemical De-Ice	15.30
Chemical Propeller De-Ice	15.31
Chemical Ground De-icing of Aircraft.....	15.31
Frost Removal.....	15.32
Deicing Fluid	15.32
Holdover Time (HOT)	15.32
Critical Surfaces	15.32
Ice and Snow Removal	15.34
Rain Control Systems	15.34
Windshield Wiper Systems	15.34
Chemical Rain Repellent	15.35
Windshield Surface Seal Coating	15.35
Pneumatic Rain Removal Systems	15.36
Questions	15.39
Answers.....	15.40
SUB-MODULE 16	
LANDING GEAR (ATA 32)	
Knowledge Requirements	16.1
13.16 - Landing Gear (ATA 32).....	16.2
Landing Gear Construction.....	16.2
Landing Gear Configurations	16.2
Tail Wheel-Type Landing Gear.....	16.2
Tandem Landing Gear.....	16.3
Tricycle-Type Landing Gear	16.3
Fixed And Retractable Landing Gear	16.4
Shock Absorbing.....	16.4

Shock Struts	16.6
Extension and Retraction Systems: Normal	16.6
Emergency Extension Systems	16.8
Landing Gear Retraction Test.....	16.8
Indications and Warning	16.9
Landing Gear Safety Devices	16.10
Ground Locks	16.10
Nose Wheel Centering.....	16.10
Safety Switches.....	16.10
Proximity Sensors.....	16.11
Air-Ground Sensing	16.12
Steering	16.13
Nose Wheel Steering.....	16.13
Steering Damper	16.14
Shimmy Dampers.....	16.15
Aircraft Wheels	16.16
Wheel Construction.....	16.16
Inboard Wheel Half.....	16.16
Outboard Wheel Half.....	16.17
Wheel Inspection	16.18
On Aircraft Inspection.....	16.18
Proper Installation	16.18
Axe Nut Torque	16.19
Off Aircraft Wheel Inspection.....	16.19
Loosening The Tire From The Wheel Rim.....	16.20
Disassembly Of The Wheel	16.20
Cleaning The Wheel Assembly.....	16.20
Inspection Of The Wheel Halves	16.20
Wheel Tie Bolt Inspection	16.21
Key And Key Screw Inspection	16.21
Fusible Plug Inspection.....	16.21
Balance Weights	16.21
Wheel Bearings.....	16.22
Cleaning The Wheel Bearings	16.22
Inspection Of Wheel Bearings.....	16.22
Bearing Handling And Lubrication.....	16.23
Aircraft Brakes.....	16.24
Types And Construction Of Aircraft Brakes.....	16.25
Single Disc Brakes	16.25
Floating Disc Brakes.....	16.25
Fixed-Disc Brakes.....	16.27
Dual-Disc Brakes.....	16.28
Multiple-Disc Brakes.....	16.28
Segmented Rotor-Disc Brakes.....	16.29
Carbon Brakes.....	16.31
Expander Tube Brakes	16.33
Brake Actuating Systems.....	16.35
Independent Master Cylinders.....	16.35
Boosted Brakes	16.37
Power Brakes	16.38
Brake Control Valve/ Brake Metering Valve.....	16.38
Emergency Brake Systems.....	16.40
Parking Brake.....	16.42
Brake Deboosters	16.42
Anti-Skid	16.43
System Operation	16.43
Wheel Speed Sensors	16.43
Control Units.....	16.44
Anti-skid Control Valves.....	16.46
Touchdown And Lock Wheel Protection.....	16.46
Anti-skid System Tests.....	16.47
Ground Test	16.47
In-Flight Test	16.48
Anti-skid System Maintenance	16.48
Wheel Speed Sensor.....	16.48
Control Valve.....	16.48
Control Unit	16.48
Auto Braking	16.48
Aircraft Tires And Tubes	16.49
Ply Rating	16.49
Tube-Type Or Tubeless	16.49
Bias Ply Or Radial.....	16.49
Tire Construction	16.49
Bead	16.50
Carcass Plies	16.50
Tread	16.50
Sidewall	16.50
Chine	16.50
Tire Inspection On The Aircraft.....	16.50
Tire Removal.....	16.50
Questions	16.53
Answers.....	16.54

SUB-MODULE 17

OXYGEN (ATA 35)

Knowledge Requirements	17.1
13.17 - Oxygen (ATA 35)	17.2
Oxygen And The Atmosphere	17.2
Human Respiration and Circulation.....	17.2
Sources Of Oxygen	17.3
Oxygen Storage	17.4
Gaseous Oxygen Tanks	17.4
Chemical Or Solid Oxygen	17.5
On board Oxygen Generating Systems (OBOGS) ..	17.6

CONTENTS

Liquid Oxygen	17.6	System Layout	18.7
Oxygen Charging.....	17.6	Sources.....	18.7
Oxygen Systems and Supply Regulation.....	17.8	Storage.....	18.7
Continuous-Flow Systems	17.8	Pressure Control.....	18.7
System Layout: Cabin (Continuous Flow).....	17.9	Distribution.....	18.8
Demand-Flow Systems	17.11	Indications and Warnings.....	18.10
Diluter-Demand	17.12	Interface With Other Systems.....	18.11
Pressure Demand	17.13	Questions	18.13
System Layout: Cockpit.....	17.13	Answers.....	18.14
Chemical Oxygen Systems	17.14		
Electronic Pulse Demand Systems	17.15		
LOX Systems	17.15		
Oxygen System Distribution.....	17.16		
Oxygen Indication and Warnings	17.16		
Oxygen System Maintenance.....	17.17		
Leak Testing Gaseous Oxygen Systems	17.18		
Draining An Oxygen System	17.18		
Purging An Oxygen System	17.18		
Inspection of Masks and Hoses	17.19		
Replacement of Tubing, Valves, and Fittings	17.20		
Oxygen System Safety.....	17.20		
Questions	17.21		
Answers.....	17.22		
SUB-MODULE 18			
PNEUMATIC/VACUUM (ATA 36)			
Knowledge Requirements	18.1		
13.18 - Pneumatic/Vacuum (ATA 36).....	18.2		
Vacuum Systems	18.2		
System Layout	18.2		
Cockpit	18.2		
Cabin	18.2		
Pneumatic Systems	18.2		
High Pressure Systems	18.2		
System Layout	18.2		
Sources.....	18.3		
Storage.....	18.3		
Charging.....	18.4		
Distribution	18.4		
Supply Regulation	18.4		
Emergency Back-Up Systems/Pneudraulics	18.5		
Nitrogen Bottles	18.5		
Gear Emergency Extension Cable And Handle	18.5		
Dump Valve.....	18.5		
High Pressure Pneumatic Power System			
Maintenance	18.7		
Medium-Pressure Pneumatic Systems.....	18.7		
SUB-MODULE 19			
WATER/WASTE (ATA 38)			
Knowledge Requirements	19.1		
13.19 - Water/Waste Systems (ATA 38)	19.2		
Layout	19.2		
Supply	19.2		
Distribution	19.2		
Servicing	19.3		
Draining	19.4		
Toilet Systems	19.4		
Flushing	19.4		
Layout	19.6		
Servicing	19.7		
Corrosion Aspects	19.7		
Questions	19.9		
Answers.....	19.10		
SUB-MODULE 20			
INTEGRATED MODULAR AVIONICS (ATA 42)			
Knowledge Requirements	20.1		
13.20 - Integrated Modular Avionics (ATA 42)	20.2		
Integration Of Avionics	20.2		
Digital Data Bus Use Reduces Wiring	20.4		
Computer Architecture	20.6		
Design Concepts	20.6		
Common Core System (CCS) Concept	20.6		
Network Components	20.6		
Boeing 777 Aims	20.6		
Open IMA Concept	20.9		
Questions	20.13		
Answers.....	20.14		
SUB-MODULE 21			
CABIN SYSTEMS (ATA 44)			
Knowledge Requirements	21.1		
13.21 - Cabin Systems (ATA 44)	21.2		
Introduction	21.2		

Cabin Intercommunication Data System	21.2
Cabin Network Service	21.2
Cabin Core System	21.3
777 Cabin Services System.....	21.3
In-Flight Entertainment (IFE) – Boeing 777.....	21.4
External Communication System	21.5
Cabin Mass Memory System	21.6
Cabin Monitoring System	21.6
Miscellaneous Cabin Systems	21.6
Aircraft Wi-Fi.....	21.7
External Cameras.....	21.7
FLIR.....	21.7
Pictorial Moving Map Displays	21.8
Questions	21.9
Answers.....	21.10

SUB-MODULE 22

INFORMATION SYSTEMS (ATA 46)

Knowledge Requirements	22.1
13.22 - Information Systems (ATA 46).....	22.2
Boeing Information Systems	22.2
Flight Deck B777 Electronic Flight Bag.....	22.2
Maintenance Info System.....	22.3
Passenger Cabin Info System.....	22.4
Airbus Information Systems	22.4
Network Server System (NSS).....	22.4
Avionics Domain.....	22.5
Flight Operations Domain.....	22.6
Communication and Cabin Domain.....	22.7
Air Traffic and Information Management System.....	22.7
Air Traffic Service Unit (ATSU)	22.8
Datalink Control and Display Units (DCDU).....	22.9
Multifunction Control Display Unit (MCDU).....	22.9
Questions	22.11
Answers.....	22.12
Acronym Index	A.1
Index	I.1

13.1 - AEROPLANE AERODYNAMICS AND FLIGHT CONTROLS

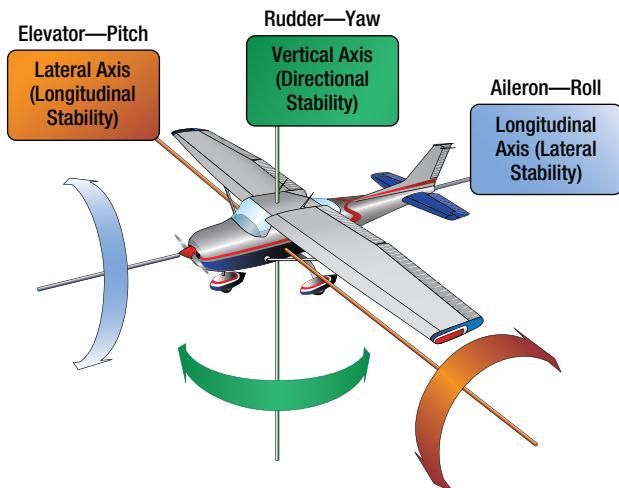
The directional control of a fixed-wing aircraft takes place around the lateral, longitudinal, and vertical axes by means of flight control surfaces designed to create movement about these axes. These control devices are hinged or movable surfaces through which the attitude of an aircraft is controlled during takeoff, flight, and landing. They are usually divided into two major groups: 1) primary or main flight control surfaces and 2) secondary or auxiliary control surfaces.

PRIMARY FLIGHT CONTROL SURFACES

The primary flight control surfaces on a fixed-wing aircraft include: ailerons, elevators, and the rudder. The ailerons are attached to the trailing edge of both wings and when moved, rotate the aircraft around the longitudinal axis. The elevator is attached to the trailing edge of the horizontal stabilizer. When it is moved, it alters aircraft pitch, which is the attitude about the horizontal or lateral axis. The rudder is hinged to the trailing edge of the vertical stabilizer. When the rudder changes position, the aircraft rotates about the vertical axis (yaw). *Figure 1-1* shows the primary flight controls of a light aircraft and the movement they create relative to the three axes of flight.

Primary control surfaces are usually similar in construction to one another and vary only in size, shape, and methods of attachment. On aluminum light aircraft, their structure is often similar to an all-metal wing. This is appropriate because the primary control surfaces are simply smaller aerodynamic devices. They are typically made from an aluminum alloy structure built around a single spar member or torque tube to which ribs are fitted and a skin is attached. The lightweight ribs are, in many cases, stamped out from flat aluminum sheet stock. Holes in the ribs lighten the assembly. An aluminum skin is attached with rivets. *Figure 1-2* illustrates this type of structure, which can be found on the primary control surfaces of light aircraft as well as on medium and heavy aircraft.

Primary control surfaces constructed from composite materials are also commonly used. These are found on many heavy and high-performance aircraft, as well as gliders, home-built, and light-sport aircraft. The weight and strength advantages over traditional construction can be significant. A wide variety of materials and construction techniques are employed. *Figure 1-3* shows



Primary Control Surface	Airplane Movement	Axes of Rotation	Type of Stability
Aileron	Roll	Longitudinal	Lateral
Elevator/Stabilizer	Pitch	Lateral	Longitudinal
Rudder	Yaw	Vertical	Directional

Figure 1-1. Flight control surfaces move the aircraft around the three axes of flight.

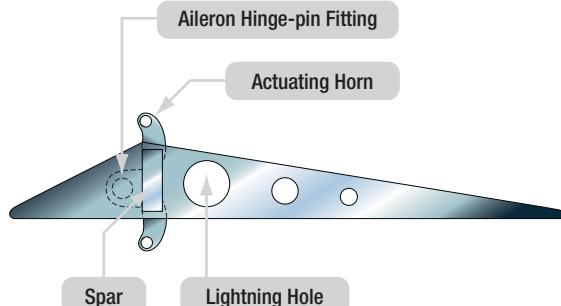


Figure 1-2. Typical structure of an aluminum flight control surface.

examples of aircraft that use composite technology on primary flight control surfaces. Note that the control surfaces of fabric-covered aircraft often have fabric covered surfaces just as aluminum-skinned (light) aircraft typically have all-aluminum control surfaces.

OPERATION AND EFFECT OF ROLL CONTROL DEVICES

AILERONS

Ailerons are the primary flight control surfaces that move the aircraft about the longitudinal axis. In other words, movement of the ailerons in flight causes the

aircraft to roll. Ailerons are usually located on the outboard trailing edge of each of the wings. They are built into the wing and are calculated as part of the wing's surface area. **Figure 1-4** shows aileron locations on various wing tip designs.

Ailerons are controlled by a side-to-side motion of the control stick in the cockpit or a rotation of the control yoke. When the aileron on one wing deflects down, the aileron on the opposite wing deflects upward. This amplifies the movement of the aircraft around the longitudinal axis. On the wing on which the aileron trailing edge moves downward, camber is increased and lift is increased. Conversely, on the other wing, the raised aileron decreases lift. (**Figure 1-5**)



Figure 1-3. Composite control surfaces and some of the many aircraft that utilize them.

The result is a sensitive response to the control input to roll the aircraft. The pilot's request for aileron movement and roll are transmitted from the cockpit to the actual control surface in a variety of ways depending on the aircraft. A system of control cables and pulleys, push-pull tubes, hydraulics, electric, or a combination of these can be employed. (**Figure 1-6**)

Simple, light aircraft usually do not have hydraulic or electric fly-by-wire aileron control. These are found on heavy and high-performance aircraft. Large aircraft and some high performance aircraft may also have a second set of ailerons located inboard on the trailing edge of the wings. These are part of a complex system of primary and secondary control surfaces used to provide lateral control and stability in flight. At low speeds, the ailerons may be augmented by the use of flaps and spoilers. At high speeds, only inboard aileron deflection is required to roll the aircraft while the other control surfaces are locked out or remain stationary.

Figure 1-7 illustrates the location of the typical flight control surfaces found on a transport category aircraft.

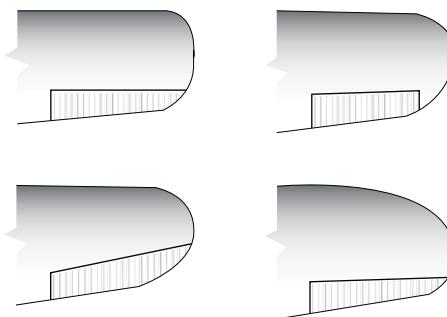


Figure 1-4. Aileron location on various wings.

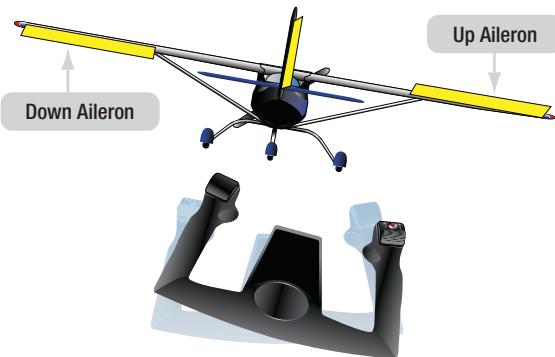


Figure 1-5. Differential aileron control movement. When one aileron is moved down, the aileron on the opposite wing is deflected upward.

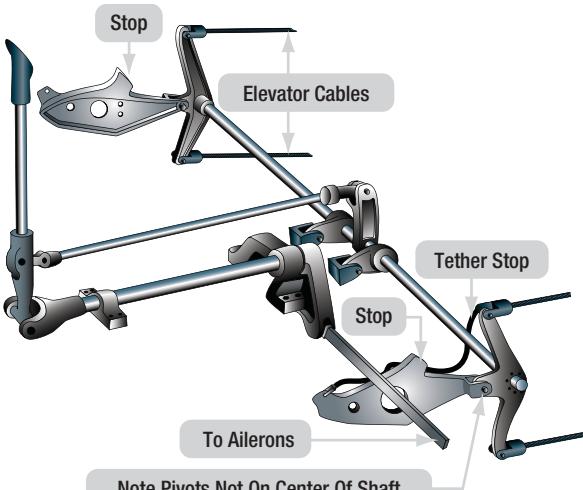


Figure 1-6. Transferring control surface inputs from the cockpit.

SPOILERS

A spoiler is a device found on the upper surface of many heavy and high-performance aircraft. It is stowed flush to the wing's upper surface. When deployed, it raises up into the airstream and disrupts the laminar airflow of the wing, thus reducing lift. Spoilers are made with similar construction materials and techniques as the other flight control surfaces on the aircraft. At low speeds, spoilers are rigged to operate when the ailerons operate to assist with the lateral movement and stability of the aircraft.

On the wing where the aileron is moved up, the spoilers also raise thus amplifying the reduction of lift on that wing. (*Figure 1-8*) On the wing with downward aileron deflection, the spoilers remain stowed. As the speed of the aircraft increases, the ailerons become more effective and the spoiler interconnect disengages. Note that spoilers are also used in as drag inducing devices.

OPERATION AND EFFECT OF PITCH CONTROL DEVICES

ELEVATORS

The elevator is the primary flight control surface that moves the aircraft around the horizontal or lateral axis. This causes the nose of the aircraft to pitch up or down. The elevator is hinged to the trailing edge of the horizontal stabilizer and typically spans most or all of its width. It is controlled in the cockpit by pushing or pulling the control yoke forward or aft. Light aircraft use a system of control cables and pulleys or push pull tubes to transfer cockpit inputs to the movement of the elevator. High performance and large aircraft typically employ more complex systems. Hydraulic power is commonly used to move the elevator on these aircraft. On aircraft equipped with fly-by-wire controls, a combination of electrical and hydraulic power is used.

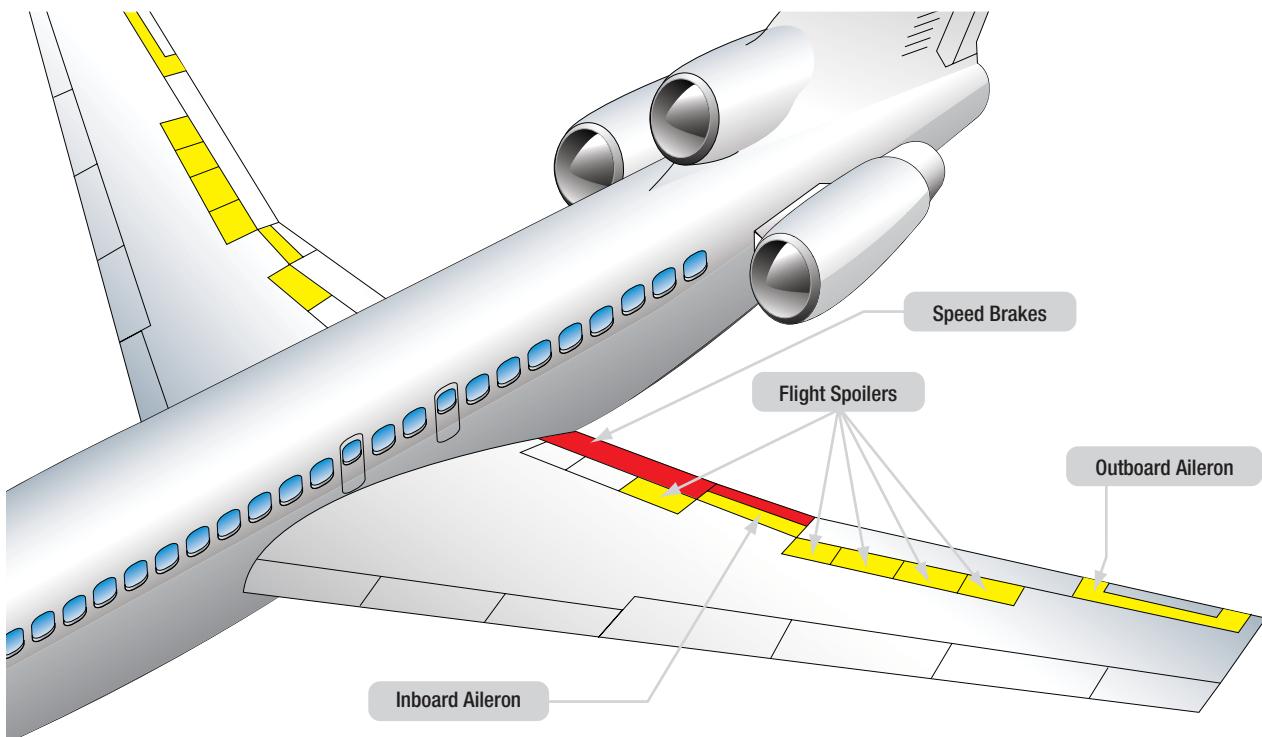


Figure 1-7. Typical flight control surfaces on a transport category aircraft.



Figure 1-8. Spoilers deployed upon landing a transport category aircraft.

STABILATORS

A movable horizontal tail section, called a stabilator, is a control surface that combines the action of both the horizontal stabilizer and the elevator. (*Figure 1-9*) Basically, a stabilator is a horizontal stabilizer that can also be rotated about the horizontal axis to affect the pitch of the aircraft.

VARIABLE INCIDENCE STABILIZERS

A variable incidence stabilizer refers to any horizontal stabilizer in which the angle of incidence of the horizontal stabilizer is adjustable. Thus, a stabilator is a variable incidence horizontal stabilizer. Various mechanisms and operating rigging are available. Most large aircraft use a motorized jackscrew to alter the position of the stabilizer often energized by the trim tab switch on the control yoke. The reason for a stabilator or any horizontal stabilizer variable incidence device is to minimize drag when trimming the aircraft in flight. Deflection of the elevator via the use of a trim tab causes drag and requires a relatively large elevator on large aircraft to achieve all desired trim settings. By varying the angle of the horizontal stabilizer to adjust pitch, less drag is created and elevator size and deflection may be reduced. (*Figure 1-10*)

CANARDS

A canard utilizes the concept of two lifting surfaces. It functions as a horizontal stabilizer located in front of the main wings. In effect, the canard is an airfoil similar to the horizontal surface on a conventional aft-tail design.



Figure 1-9. A stabilizer and index marks on a transport category aircraft.

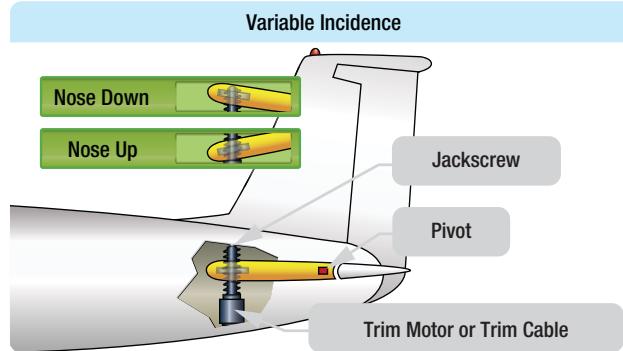


Figure 1-10. Some airplanes, including most jet transports, use a variable stabilizer to provide the required pitch trim forces.

The difference is that the canard actually creates lift and holds the nose up, as opposed to the aft-tail design which exerts downward force on the tail to prevent the nose from rotating downward. (*Figure 1-11*)

The canard design dates back to the pioneer days of aviation, most notably used on the Wright Flyer. Recently, the canard configuration has regained popularity and is appearing on newer aircraft. Canard designs include two types—one with a horizontal surface of about the same size as a normal aft-tail design, and the other with a surface of the same approximate size and airfoil shape of the aft-mounted wing known as a tandem wing configuration. Theoretically, the canard is considered more efficient because using the horizontal surface to help lift the weight of the aircraft should result in less drag for a given amount of lift.

OPERATION AND EFFECT OF YAW CONTROL DEVICES

RUDDERS

The rudder is the primary control surface that causes an aircraft to yaw or move about the vertical axis. This provides directional control and thus points the nose



Figure 1-11. The Piaggio P180 includes a variable-sweep canard design, which provides longitudinal stability about the lateral axis.

of the aircraft in the direction desired. Most aircraft have a single rudder hinged to the trailing edge of the vertical stabilizer. It is controlled by a pair of foot-operated rudder pedals in the cockpit. When the right pedal is pushed forward, it deflects the rudder to the right which moves the nose of the aircraft to the right. The left pedal is rigged to simultaneously move aft. When the left pedal is pushed forward, the nose of the aircraft moves to the left.

As with the other primary flight controls, the transfer of the movement of the cockpit controls to the rudder varies with the complexity of the aircraft. Many aircraft incorporate the directional movement of the nose or tail wheel into the rudder control system for ground operation. This allows the operator to steer the aircraft with the rudder pedals during taxi when the airspeed is not high enough for the control surfaces to be effective. Some large aircraft have a split rudder arrangement. This is actually two rudders, one above the other. At low speeds, both rudders deflect in the same direction when the pedals are pushed. At higher speeds, one of the rudders becomes inoperative as the deflection of a single rudder is aerodynamically sufficient to maneuver the aircraft.

RUDDER LIMITERS

In flight, most large aircraft oscillate slightly from side to side. Yaw dampener units automatically detect this movement and send signals to the hydraulic power control unit (PCU) that moves the rudder so that it can correct for these yaw oscillations. Similarly, rudders are known to deflect without being commanded to do so by the flight crew. Again, the yaw dampener is designed to correct the fluctuations by signaling the PCU. However, too large of an involuntary deflection to a rudder can cause a loss

of control of the aircraft. A rudder limiter is fitted to many aircraft to prevent any more than a few degrees of involuntary motion of the rudder. Essentially, it limits the movement unless it is commanded from the flight deck.

SECONDARY OR AUXILIARY CONTROL SURFACES

There are several secondary or auxiliary flight control surfaces. Their names, locations, and functions of those for most large aircraft are listed in *Figure 1-12*.

OPERATION AND EFFECT OF TABS

Trim Tabs

The force of the air against a control surface during the high speed of flight can make it difficult to move and hold that control surface in the deflected position. A control surface might also be too sensitive for similar reasons. Several different tabs are used to aid with these types of problems. The table in *Figure 1-13* summarizes the various tabs and their uses. While in flight, it is desirable for the pilot to be able to take his or her hands and feet off of the controls and have the aircraft maintain its flight condition.

Trims tabs are designed to allow this. Most trim tabs are small movable surfaces located on the trailing edge of a primary flight control surface. A small movement of the tab in the direction opposite of the direction the flight control surface is deflected, causing air to strike the tab, in turn producing a force that aids in maintaining the flight control surface in the desired position. Through linkage set from the cockpit, the tab can be positioned so that it is actually holding the control surface in position rather than the pilot. Therefore, elevator tabs are used to maintain the speed of the aircraft since they assist in maintaining the selected pitch. Rudder tabs can be set to hold yaw in check and maintain heading. Aileron tabs can help keep the wings level.

Occasionally, a simple light aircraft may have a stationary metal plate attached to the trailing edge of a primary flight control, usually the rudder. This is also a trim tab as shown in *Figure 1-14*. It can be bent slightly on the ground to trim the aircraft in flight to a hands off condition when flying straight and level. The correct amount of bend can be determined only by flying the aircraft after an adjustment. Note that a small amount of bending is usually sufficient.

Secondary/Auxiliary Flight Control Surfaces		
Name	Location	Function
Flaps	Inboard trailing edge of wings	Extends the camber of the wing for greater lift and slower flight. Allows control at low speeds for short field takeoffs and landings.
Trim Tabs	Trailing edge of primary flight control surfaces	Reduces the force needed to move a primary control surface.
Balance Tabs	Trailing edge of primary flight control surfaces	Reduces the force needed to move a primary control surface.
Anti-balance Tabs	Trailing edge of primary flight control surfaces	Increases feel and effectiveness of primary control surface.
Servo Tabs	Trailing edge of primary flight control surfaces	Assists or provides the force for moving a primary flight control.
Spoilers	Upper and/or trailing edge of wing	Decreases (spoils) lift. Can augment aileron function.
Slats	Mid to outboard leading edge of wing	Extends the camber of the wing for greater lift and slower flight. Allows control at low speeds for short field takeoffs and landings.
Slots	Outer leading edge of wing forward of ailerons	Directs air over upper surface of wing during high angle of attack. Lowers stall speed and provides control during slow flight.
Leading Edge Flap	Inboard leading edge of wing	Extends the camber of the wing for greater lift and slower flight. Allows control at low speeds for short field takeoffs and landings.

NOTE: An aircraft may possess none, one, or a combination of the above control surfaces.

Figure 1-12. Secondary or auxiliary control surfaces and respective locations for larger aircraft.

Flight Control Tabs			
Type	Direction of Motion (in relation to control surface)	Activation	Effect
Trim	Opposite	Set by pilot from cockpit. Uses independent linkage.	Statically balances the aircraft in flight. Allows "hands off" maintenance of flight condition.
Balance	Opposite	Moves when pilot moves control surface. Coupled to control surface linkage.	Aids pilot in overcoming the force needed to move the control surface.
Servo	Opposite	Directly linked to flight control input device. Can be primary or back-up means of control.	Aerodynamically positions control surfaces that require too much force to move manually.
Anti-balance or Anti-servo	Same	Directly linked to flight control input device.	Increases force needed by pilot to change flight control position. De-sensitizes flight controls.
Spring	Opposite	Located in line of direct linkage to servo tab. Spring assists when control forces become too high in high-speed flight.	Enables moving control surface when forces are high. Inactive during slow flight.

Figure 1-13. Various tabs and their uses.

Balance Tabs

The aerodynamic phenomenon of moving a trim tab in one direction to cause the control surface to experience a force moving in the opposite direction is exactly what

occurs with the use of balance tabs. (*Figure 1-15*) Often, it is difficult to move a primary control surface due to its surface area and the speed of the air rushing over it.