

## FAA Medical Information

### Individuals must pass a rigid medical exam, which includes:

- **Vision Standards** — Applicants for ATCS employment in an en route center or a terminal must have distant and near vision of 20/20 or better in each eye separately, without correction, or have lenses that correct distant and near vision to 20/20, each eye separately. Applicants for a flight service station specialist position must have distant and near vision of 20/20 or better in at least one eye, without correction, or have lenses that correct distant and near vision to 20/20, in at least one eye.
- **Color Vision Standards** — Applicants must have normal color vision.
- **Hearing Standards** — Applicants must have no hearing loss in either ear of more than 25 db at 500, 1,000 and 2,000 Hz, and no more than a 20 db loss in the better ear by audiometer, using ANSI (1969) standards.
- **Cardiovascular Standards** — Applicants must have no medical history of any form of heart disease. A history of high blood pressure requiring medication will require special review.
- **Neurological Standards** — Applicants must have no medical history or clinical diagnosis of a convulsive disorder, or a disturbance of consciousness, without satisfactory medical explanation of the cause, and must not be under any treatment, including preventive, for any condition of the nervous system.
- **Psychiatric Standard** — Any medical history or clinical diagnosis of a psychosis, or other severe mental disorders, is disqualifying.
- **Diabetes** — A medical history or diagnosis of diabetes mellitus will require special review.
- **Substance Abuse/Dependency** — A history of substance abuse/dependency, including alcohol, narcotic, non-narcotic drugs, and other substances will be extensively investigated.
- **Psychological Exam** — Individuals must take and pass a psychological exam.
- **General Medical** — All other medical conditions will be evaluated on an individual basis. All applicants' medical histories and current examinations will be carefully reviewed. This includes past medical records and, if applicable, a review of military medical records.

The physical impairments/medical conditions that follow, unless otherwise noted, are disqualifying because there are medical and/or management reasons to conclude that an individual with such impairment/condition cannot perform the duties of the position without unacceptable risk to his or her own health, or to the health or safety of others (employees or the public).

### Initial Employment:

Applicants for initial employment to air traffic control specialist positions must meet the following requirements. (Unless otherwise indicated, these requirements are identical for all specializations.)

#### Eye

##### 1. *Visual Acuity*

a. *Terminal and Center Positions* -- Applicants must demonstrate distant and near vision of 20/20 or better (Snellen or equivalent) in each eye separately. If glasses

or contact lenses are required, refractive error that exceeds plus or minus 5.50 diopters of spherical equivalent or plus or minus 3.00 diopters of cylinder is disqualifying. The use of orthokeratology or radial keratotomy methods is not acceptable for purposes of meeting this requirement. The use of contact lenses for the correction of near vision only or the use of bifocal contact lenses for the correction of near vision is unacceptable.

*Equivalents in Near Visual Acuity Notations*

Standard Test Chart: 14/14

Snellen Metric: 0.50M

Jaeger: J-1

Metric: 6/6

2. *Color Vision* -- For all specializations, applicants must demonstrate normal color vision.

3. *Visual Fields*

a. *Terminal and Center Positions* -- Applicants must demonstrate a normal central visual field, i.e, the field within 30 degrees of the fixation point, in each eye. They must also demonstrate a normal peripheral visual field, i.e., the field of vision beyond the central field that extends 140 degrees in the horizontal meridian and 100 degrees in the vertical meridian, in each eye.

4. *Intraocular Pressure* -- For all specializations, if tonometry reveals either intraocular pressure greater than 20 mm of mercury, or a difference of 5 or more mm of mercury intraocular pressure between the two eyes, ophthalmological consultation is required to rule out the presence of glaucoma. If a diagnosis of glaucoma is made, or if any medication is routinely required for control of intraocular tension, the applicant is disqualified.

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5. *Phorias*

a. *Terminal and Center Positions* -- If an applicant demonstrates greater than 1-1/2 prism diopters of hyperphoria or greater than 10 prism diopters of esophoria or exophoria, evaluation by a qualified eye specialist is required. If this evaluation determines that bifoveal fixation and vergence-phoria relationships sufficient to prevent disruption of fusion under normal working conditions are not present, the applicant is disqualified.

6. *Eye Pathology* -- For all specializations, if examination of either eye or adnexa reveals any form of glaucoma or cataract formation, uveitis, or any other acute or chronic pathological condition that would be likely to interfere with proper function or likely to progress to that degree, the applicant is disqualified.

7. *Chronic Eye Disease* -- For all specializations, an applicant with any chronic disease of either eye that may interfere with visual function is disqualified.

8. *Ocular Motility* -- For terminal and center specialist positions, applicants must demonstrate full extraocular motility.

9. *History of Eye Surgery* -- For all specializations, a history of ocular surgery requires ophthalmological consultation. If consultation indicates that the condition that necessitated surgery could interfere with the visual function necessary for performance as an air traffic control specialist, the applicant is disqualified. A history of radial keratotomy is disqualifying.

### **Ear, Nose, Throat, Mouth**

1. Examination must show no outer, middle, or inner ear disease, either acute or chronic, unilateral or bilateral.

2. Examination must show no active disease of either mastoid.

3. Examination must show no unhealed perforation of either eardrum.

4. Examination must show no deformity of either outer ear that might interfere with the use

of headphones of the applied or semi-inserted type.

5. Examination must show no disease or deformity of the hard palate, soft palate, or tongue that interferes with enunciation. The applicant must demonstrate clearly understandable speech, and an absence of stuttering or stammering.

6. Applicants must demonstrate, by audiometry, no hearing loss in either ear of more than 25 decibels in the 500, 1000, or 2000 Hz ranges and must demonstrate no hearing loss in these ranges of more than 20 decibels in the better ear, using ISO (1964) or ANSI (1969) standards. Hearing loss in either ear of more than 40 decibels in the 4000 Hz range may necessitate an otological consultation. Incipient disease processes that may lead to early hearing loss will be cause for disqualification.

### **Cardiovascular**

1. No medical history of any form of heart disease. Must demonstrate absence of heart  
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disease to clinical examination, including resting and post-exercise electrocardiogram.

2. Blood pressure levels no greater than the appropriate values as shown below:

#### **Age**

#### **Maximum Reclining Blood Pressure**

#### **Systolic Diastolic**

20 to 29 140 90

30 to 39 150 90

40 to 49 150 100

50 & over 160 100

3. Must demonstrate to X-ray no evidence of increase in heart size beyond normal limits.

4. An applicant under any form of treatment for any disease of the cardiovascular system is disqualified.

### **Neurological**

1. No medical history or clinical diagnosis of a convulsive disorder.

2. No medical history or clinical diagnosis of a disturbance of consciousness without satisfactory medical explanation of the cause.

3. No other disease of the nervous system that would constitute a hazard to safety in the air traffic control system.

4. An applicant under any form of treatment, including preventive treatment, of any disease of the nervous system, is disqualified.

### **Musculoskeletal**

1. No deformity of spine or limbs of sufficient degree to interfere with satisfactory and safe performance of duty. Certain limitations of range of motion may be acceptable for certain specific options or positions, in which case acceptance of limitations will be noted specifically for that position or option only.

2. No absence of any extremity or digit or any portion thereof sufficient to interfere with the requirements for locomotion and manual dexterity of the position being sought. Acceptance of limitations for employment for a specific option or position will be noted for that option or position only.

3. No condition that predisposes to fatigue or discomfort induced by long periods of standing or sitting.

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### **General Medical**

1. No medical history or clinical diagnosis of diabetes mellitus.

2. Must possess such a body build as not to interfere with sitting in an ordinary office armchair.

3. Must have no other organic, functional, or structural disease, defect, or limitation found to indicate clinically a potential hazard to safety in the air traffic control system. A

pertinent history and clinical evaluation, including laboratory evaluations, will be obtained, and when clinically indicated, special consultations or examinations will be accomplished.

### **Psychiatric**

No established medical history or clinical diagnosis of any of the following:

1. A psychosis;
2. A neurosis; or
3. Any personality or mental disorder that clearly demonstrates a potential hazard to safety in the air traffic control system. Determinations will be based on medical case history (including past, social, and occupational adjustment) supported by clinical psychologists and board-certified psychiatrists, including such psychological tests as may be required as part of medical evaluation.

### **Substance Dependency**

A history, review of all available records, and clinical and laboratory examination will be utilized to determine the presence or absence of substance dependency, including alcohol, narcotic, and non-narcotic drugs. Wherever clinically indicated, the applicant must demonstrate an absence of these on any clinical or psychological tests required as part of the medical evaluation.

### **Retention Requirements:**

The physical requirements in this section apply to: (1) air traffic control specialists in the center and terminal specializations who are actively engaged in the separation and control of air traffic, (2) immediate supervisors of air traffic control specialists actively engaged in the separation and control of air traffic, and (3) air traffic control specialists in the station specialization who regularly perform flight assistance services.

Employees occupying the types of positions described above must requalify in an annual medical examination, usually given during the employee's month of birth. Controllers incurring illness, injury, or incapacitation at any time between the annual examinations must be medically cleared before returning to air traffic control duty. Examinations, including laboratory tests and consultations, will be accomplished to the extent required to determine medical clearance for continued duty. New employees are required to meet the retention requirements by examination during the first 10 months of service.

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Employees who are found to be not physically or emotionally qualified for air traffic control duties at any time will be subject to reassignment to a position for which they are fully qualified, retirement for disability if eligible, or separation from the service.

To be medically qualified for retention, an air traffic control specialist must meet the following requirements. (Unless otherwise indicated these requirements are identical for all specializations.)

### **Eye**

Retention requirements for vision and eye conditions are identical to the requirements for initial hire.

### **Ear, Nose, and Throat**

#### *1. Ear Disease; Equilibrium*

a. *Terminal and Center Positions* -- Must demonstrate no chronic disease of the outer or middle ear, unilateral or bilateral, that might interfere with the comfortable, efficient use of standard headphone apparatus or that might interfere with accurate perception of voice transmissions or spoken communications. Must have no ear disease that might cause a disturbance of equilibrium.

b. *Flight Service Station Positions* -- Must demonstrate no chronic disease of the outer or middle ear, unilateral or bilateral, that might interfere with accurate

perception of voice transmissions or spoken communications. Must have no ear disease that might cause a disturbance of equilibrium.

2. *Mastoid* -- No active disease of either mastoid.
3. *Eardrum Perforation* -- Must demonstrate no unhealed perforation of either eardrum.
4. *Speech* -- Must have no interference with enunciation, and must have clear speech free of stuttering or stammering.
5. *Hearing Loss* -- No hearing loss in either ear of more than 30 decibels in either the 500, 1000, or 2000 Hz ranges. No loss in these ranges greater than 25 decibels in the better ear. Non-static hearing loss in either ear of greater than 50 decibels in the 4000 Hz range will require an otological consultation.

### **Cardiovascular**

#### 1. *Heart Disease*

- a. *Terminal and Center Positions* -- No history or symptomatic form of heart disease or any form requiring therapy.
- b. *Flight Service Station Positions* -- No symptomatic form of heart disease.

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2. *Disturbance of Rhythm; Other Abnormality; EKG* -- Must demonstrate no disturbance of rhythm or other cardiac abnormality on clinical examination, including resting, and when clinically indicated, post-exercise electrocardiography.
3. *Blood Pressure* -- Retention requirements are identical to the requirements for initial hire.
4. *Heart Size* -- Must have no increase in heart size beyond normal limits.

### **Neurological**

Retention requirements are identical to the requirements for initial hire.

### **Musculoskeletal**

Retention requirements are identical to the requirements for initial hire.

### **General Medical**

#### 1. *Diabetes Mellitus*

- a. *Terminal and Center Positions* -- An employee who has an established clinical diagnosis of diabetes mellitus will be evaluated for continued duty based upon the degree of control of the disease. Whether by diet alone, or diet and hypoglycemic drugs, control that results in the absence of symptoms and the absence of complications of the disease or the therapy may be considered as satisfactory control. A controller with diabetes mellitus who cannot demonstrate satisfactory control over specified and observed periods of 48 hours is not cleared for duty involving active air traffic control.
  - b. *Flight Service Station Positions* -- An employee who has an established clinical diagnosis of diabetes mellitus will be evaluated for continued duty based upon the degree of control of the disease. Whether by diet alone, or diet and hypoglycemic drugs, control that results in the absence of symptoms and the absence of complications of the disease or the therapy may be considered as satisfactory control.
2. *Body Configuration* -- Must possess such a body build as not to interfere with sitting in an ordinary office armchair.
  3. *Other Medical Conditions* -- Must have no other organic, functional, or structural disease, defect, or limitation found to indicate clinically a potential hazard to safety in the air traffic control system. A pertinent history and clinical evaluation, including laboratory screening, will be obtained, and when clinically indicated, special consultations and examinations will be accomplished.

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### **Psychiatric**

1. *Psychotic Disorder* -- No established medical history or clinical diagnosis of a psychosis.
2. *Mental, Neurotic, or Personality Disorder* -- No neurosis, personality disorder, or mental disorder, that clearly indicates a potential hazard to safety in the air traffic control system. Determinations will be based on medical case history (including past, social, and occupational adjustment) supported by clinical psychologists and board-certified psychiatrists, including such psychological tests as may be required as part of medical evaluation.
3. *Alcoholism and/or Alcohol Abuse* -- No clinical diagnosis of alcoholism or alcohol abuse, since these constitute a hazard to safety in the air traffic control system. A history and clinical evaluation, including laboratory evaluation (when indicated) will be accomplished to determine the presence or absence of alcohol addiction, dependency, habituation, abuse, or use.
4. *Addiction, Dependency, Habituation, or Abuse of Dangerous Drugs* -- No clinical diagnosis of addiction, habituation, dependency, or abuse of any narcotic or non-narcotic drug, since these constitute a threat to safety in the air traffic control system. A history and clinical evaluation, including laboratory evaluation (when indicated), will be accomplished to determine the presence or absence of drug addiction, dependency, habituation, abuse, or use.

*Source: US Office of Personnel Management , Standards, Air Traffic Control Series 2152*