



## DoD INSTRUCTION 5030.61

### DoD AIRWORTHINESS POLICY

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| <b>Originating Component:</b> | Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment  |
| <b>Effective:</b>             | December 3, 2024  |
| <b>Releasability:</b>         | Cleared for public release. Available on the Directives Division Website at <a href="https://www.esd.whs.mil/DD/">https://www.esd.whs.mil/DD/</a> . |
| <b>Reissues and Cancels:</b>  | DoD Directive 5030.61, "DoD Airworthiness Policy," May 24, 2013, as amended   |
| <b>Approved by:</b>           | William A. LaPlante, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment   |

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**Purpose:** This issuance reissues the 2013 directive as a DoD instruction in accordance with the authority in DoD Directive 5135.02 to establish policy, assign responsibilities, and provide procedures for DoD airworthiness.

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## **SECTION 1: GENERAL ISSUANCE INFORMATION**

### **1.1. APPLICABILITY.**

This issuance:

- a. Applies to OSD, the Military Departments, the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the Defense Agencies, the DoD Field Activities, and all other organizational entities within the DoD (referred to collectively in this issuance as the “DoD Components”).
- b. Does not restrict the authority of or responsibilities of the Military Departments with respect to airworthiness in accordance with Sections 7013, 8013, and 9013 of Title 10, United States Code (U.S.C.).

### **1.2. POLICY.**

- a. All air systems owned, leased, operated, used, designed, or modified by a DoD Component must have undergone an airworthiness assessment. Such assessment is to be in accordance with that DoD Component’s policy. The airworthiness assessment provides DoD personnel (to include Service members and DoD civilians) and DoD contractors appropriate safety of flight and level of risk management adapted to DoD-unique mission requirements. A DoD airworthiness assessment is not required for contracted air systems if they are to be operated as civil aircraft in a manner consistent with existing civil airworthiness certification pursuant to Title 49, U.S.C.
- b. In cases where a timely airworthiness assessment is not possible, DoD Component airworthiness authorities, within their respective airworthiness guidance, will provide commanders the ability to conduct missions while employing practical risk mitigation measures.

## **SECTION 2: RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **2.1. UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR ACQUISITION AND SUSTAINMENT (USD(A&S)).**

The USD(A&S) establishes policy, assigns responsibilities, provides procedures, and oversees DoD airworthiness matters.

### **2.2. DOD COMPONENT HEADS.**

The DoD Component heads:

a. Use the established airworthiness assurance system of a Military Department or develop, implement, and operate an airworthiness assurance system in accordance with the requirements established in this issuance.

b. Direct subordinate airworthiness authorities and airworthiness authorities' management and control organizations to assist the USD(A&S) in implementing this issuance.

c. Ensure mission, function, and program records identified in this issuance or created and received in support of airworthiness assessments are retained in accordance with their DoD Component records management programs pursuant to Chapters 29, 31, and 33 of Title 44, U.S.C.; Parts 1220 through 1228 of Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR); DoD Instruction (DoDI) 5015.02; and DoD Manual 8180.01.

### **2.3. SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS.**

In addition to the responsibilities in Paragraph 2.2., the Secretaries of the Military Departments:

a. Develop, implement, and operate an airworthiness assurance system consistent with the requirements established in this issuance.

b. Direct subordinate airworthiness authorities and airworthiness authorities' management and control organizations to assist the USD(A&S) in implementing this issuance.

### **2.4. COMBATANT COMMANDERS.**

In addition to the responsibilities in Paragraph 2.2., the Combatant Commanders ensure adequate resources are allocated for airworthiness assessments required in support of flight of U.S. DoD personnel in foreign-owned military aircraft in accordance with the December 1, 2020 USD(A&S) Memorandum. This resourcing requirement does not include air systems certified in accordance with DoDI 4500.53.

## **SECTION 3: DOD STANDARDIZED AIRWORTHINESS ASSURANCE REQUIREMENTS**

### **3.1. ESTABLISH AN AIRWORTHINESS AUTHORITY.**

#### **a. Military Departments.**

Military Department airworthiness authorities will:

- (1) Be designated at the general officer/flag officer or Senior Executive Service or equivalent level.
- (2) Maintain Military Department-level guidance to implement this issuance.
- (3) Conduct airworthiness assessments and issue airworthiness approvals for their respective Military Departments.

#### **b. DoD Components Other than Military Departments.**

DoD Components other than Military Departments will:

- (1) Establish an agreement with a Military Department airworthiness authority to serve as the airworthiness authority on behalf of the requesting DoD Component; or
- (2) Establish respective DoD Component airworthiness authorities that will:
  - (a) Be designated at the general officer/flag officer or Senior Executive Service equivalent level.
  - (b) Maintain DoD Component-level guidance to implement this issuance.
  - (c) Conduct airworthiness assessments and issue airworthiness approvals for their respective DoD Component.

### **3.2. DESIGNATE TECHNICAL AUTHORITY.**

#### **a. Military Departments.**

Military Departments will establish a technical authority designated to lead a robust engineering organization capable of independently assessing airworthiness for that Military Department.

#### **b. DoD Components Other than Military Departments.**

DoD Components other than Military Departments will:

- (1) Designate a technical authority in accordance with this issuance; or

(2) Establish an agreement with a Military Department designated technical authority to serve as the technical authority on behalf of the requesting DoD Component.

### **3.3. DESIGNATE AN AIRWORTHINESS MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL ORGANIZATION.**

a. The airworthiness authority will designate a suitably trained organization that is familiar with Federal regulations and DoD policy governing airworthiness to manage and control the airworthiness process.

b. The airworthiness organization will be sufficiently independent of any acquisition program and operational influence to conduct objective airworthiness assessments and to exercise overall airworthiness oversight in compliance with this issuance.

### **3.4. AIRWORTHINESS ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL.**

a. The airworthiness authority will conduct airworthiness assessments that capture the description of the air system configuration, operating limitations, and other operating information necessary for safe operation of the air systems. An airworthiness assessment is a critical step in the airworthiness approval process but does not necessarily result in the issuance of an airworthiness approval.

b. An airworthiness approval that affirms an appropriate level of safety of flight is provided and appropriate tenets of the respective airworthiness authority's airworthiness process are met, and residual safety risks are accepted by the appropriate authority, as established in Paragraph 3.1 or pursuant to Paragraph 3.2 must be issued before flight.

### **3.5. AIRWORTHINESS RISK ASSESSMENT.**

The airworthiness authority will ensure that airworthiness risk assessments, when necessary, are conducted and documented in accordance with Military Standard MIL-STD-882E or appropriate DoD Component regulatory guidance and policy governing airworthiness assessment.

a. The appropriate risk acceptance authorities will accept the DoD risks. DoDI 5000.88 defines these authorities for acquisition programs.

b. For unmanned air systems, the risks associated with the loss of aircrew may not apply. However, as with manned air systems, risks to people on the ground, risks otherwise associated with personnel and damage to equipment, property, or environment must be identified and accepted at the appropriate level in accordance with DoDI 5000.88 for acquisition programs.

### **3.6. CONFIGURATION MANAGEMENT.**

a. DoD Components will establish and implement a means to manage air systems configurations throughout the air system's life cycle. This will include processes to identify the

configuration and manage, verify, and audit configuration changes to ensure the configuration is maintained in accordance with the airworthiness assurance requirements in this section.

b. For air systems undergoing production or modification, each DoD Component will implement a means to evaluate and control production processes such that each product meets the airworthiness assurance requirements in this issuance.

### **3.7. CONTINUING AIRWORTHINESS.**

DoD Components will establish and implement continuing airworthiness processes to ensure air system configurations are maintained in accordance with the airworthiness assurance requirements in this issuance. These continuing airworthiness processes include:

#### **a. Inspections.**

DoD Components will establish inspection intervals and criteria to assess the status of the materiel condition of the air system.

#### **b. Life Limits.**

DoD Components will establish life limits, wear limits, and conditions for mandatory replacement or overhaul as necessary to sustain operations of the air system.

#### **c. Maintenance and Overhaul.**

DoD Components will document maintenance and overhaul requirements, including physical standards of the materiel, process standards, and personnel training.

#### **d. Critical Safety Items.**

DoD Components will control critical safety items in compliance with Section 3243(g) of Title 10, U.S.C.

### **3.8. AIRWORTHINESS DESIGN CRITERIA.**

When applicable, DoD Component airworthiness authorities will use Military Handbook MIL-HDBK-516C for determining airworthiness design criteria.

### **3.9. FLIGHT TEST PARTICULAR CONSIDERATIONS.**

DoD Components will ensure airworthiness processes address issues that are particular to the flight test environment.

### **3.10. USE OF FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION (FAA) CERTIFICATIONS.**

a. An FAA certification may be used as the basis for a DoD Component airworthiness approval if the receiving airworthiness authority determines the FAA certification to be applicable and appropriate. Any gaps or differences in configuration, flight profile, intended use, and operating environment must be addressed before issuing the DoD Component's airworthiness approval.

b. When required, interface with the FAA for airworthiness certification support will be coordinated through the FAA Military Certification Branch. Interface with the FAA regarding DoD Component operations will be coordinated in accordance with DoDI 4540.01 and DoD Directive 5030.19.

### **3.11. USE OF A DOD COMPONENT AIRWORTHINESS APPROVAL.**

A DoD Component airworthiness approval may be used as the basis for another DoD Component airworthiness approval if the receiving airworthiness authority determines the approval to be applicable and appropriate. Any gaps or differences in configuration, flight profile, intended use, and operating environment must be addressed before issuing the other DoD Component's airworthiness approval.

### **3.12. JOINT PROGRAMS.**

a. Joint programs will follow the airworthiness process and policy of the lead DoD Component for that particular acquisition program.

b. The lead DoD Component airworthiness authority will make considerations for mission and design requirement differences of the other partners.

c. If there is no lead DoD Component for a particular program, the program executive officer will select a DoD Component's airworthiness authority and respective airworthiness processes to follow.

d. When a joint program is scheduled to transfer the airworthiness authority of a particular air system design to another DoD Component, the joint program must meet the requirements of that DoD Component's airworthiness process.

### **3.13. FLIGHT IN FOREIGN-OWNED MILITARY AIRCRAFT.**

Foreign-owned military aircraft designated by either the DoD Component head or the cognizant Combatant Commander to fly DoD personnel (to include Service members, DoD civilians, and DoD contractors) as passengers or aircrew must comply with this issuance. DoD commercial air transportation services must comply with DoDI 4500.53. In accordance with the December 1, 2020 USD(A&S) Memorandum, the Military Department airworthiness authorities must use the standardized guidelines to develop internal policies and procedures for issuing recognition



certificates in support of DoD Components requiring U.S. DoD personnel to embark on foreign-owned military aircraft.

### **3.14. USE OF A FOREIGN MILITARY AIRWORTHINESS APPROVAL.**

A foreign military airworthiness approval may be used as the basis for a DoD Component airworthiness approval if the approval is determined by the receiving airworthiness authority to be applicable and appropriate. The receiving airworthiness authority must examine the foreign military airworthiness authority's airworthiness approval processes to inform their decision to use the airworthiness approval. Any gaps or differences in configuration, mission, and operating environment must be addressed in terms of the appropriate level of safety before issuing the receiving airworthiness authority's airworthiness approval.

### **3.15. OTHER U.S. GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS AIRWORTHINESS ASSESSMENTS.**

A DoD Component airworthiness assessment is not required for DoD personnel operating in or with U.S. Government agency air systems operated pursuant to the authority of the Federal Aviation Regulations or in accordance with Part 102-33, Title 41, CFR.

### **3.16. OPERATOR'S MANUAL.**

Before flight, the aircrew will be provided (in an appropriate format) operator's manuals that describe the flight limits of the air system. The operator's manual will provide system descriptions, limitations, operating procedures, emergency procedures, and other relevant operating information.

### **3.17. OPERATOR AUTHORIZATION.**

Operators of DoD Component air systems will be either:

- a. Rated for manned air systems or qualified as unmanned air systems operators by one of the Military Departments and in compliance with that Military Department's flight regulations, to include qualification, training, evaluation, and currency requirements; or
- b. Civilian employees of a U.S. Government agency or as U.S. Government contractors who are qualified by one of the Military Departments and are compliant with that Military Department's flight regulations or hold appropriate FAA certifications or ratings and have complied with relevant qualification training, evaluation, and currency requirements in accordance with Federal Aviation Regulations. Civilian employees must have written authorization from the appropriate general officer/flag officer-level authority who has knowledge of the air systems to be flown.

## GLOSSARY

### G.1. ACRONYMS.

| ACRONYM  | MEANING  |
|----------|--|
| CFR      | Code of Federal Regulations                                |
| DoDI     | DoD instruction  |
| FAA      | Federal Aviation Administration                            |
| U.S.C.   | United States Code   |
| USD(A&S) | Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment |

### G.2. DEFINITIONS.

These terms and their definitions are for the purpose of this issuance.

| TERM                                 | DEFINITION   |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>air system</b>                    | Inclusive of the aircraft plus the training and support systems for the aircraft (e.g., communications, control, ground or surface control station, launch and recovery, and support element) and any weapons to be employed on the aircraft. An aircraft, manned or unmanned, is a subset of its associated air system. |
| <b>airworthiness</b>                 | The property of an air system configuration to safely attain, sustain, and complete flight in accordance with approved usage limits.   |
| <b>airworthiness approval</b>        | Documents issued by an airworthiness authority that may take a number of different forms (e.g., airworthiness release, military-type certificate, flight clearance), depending on specific airworthiness authority policy.   |
| <b>airworthiness assessment</b>      | An independent technical evaluation of an air system for its intended mission against applicable airworthiness criteria and standards.   |
| <b>airworthiness authority</b>       | An individual who has the legal mandate to develop and enforce relevant rules, regulations, and policy governing airworthiness.  |
| <b>airworthiness risk assessment</b> | Provides a comprehensive identification and evaluation of the airworthiness-related risks assumed during the operation of an air system throughout its life cycle.   |

| <b>TERM</b>                  | <b>DEFINITION</b>  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>critical safety item</b>  | A part, an assembly, installation equipment, launch equipment, recovery equipment, or support equipment for an aircraft or aviation weapon system if the part, assembly, or equipment contains a characteristic any failure, malfunction, or absence of which could cause a catastrophic or critical failure, resulting in the loss or serious damage to the air system, an unacceptable risk of personal injury or loss of life, or an uncommanded engine shutdown that jeopardizes safety. |
| <b>operating environment</b> | The surroundings or conditions in which an air system operates including, but not limited to, temperatures, loads, ambient environmental conditions, moisture and fluid exposures, the electromagnetic spectrum, radiation, maintenance, and ground handling.  |
| <b>residual safety risk</b>  | Residual safety risks are the risks remaining after mitigations have been applied  |

## REFERENCES

- Code of Federal Regulations, Title 14 (also known as the “Federal Aviation Regulations”)  
Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36  
Code of Federal Regulations, Title 41  
DoD Directive 5030.19, “DoD Responsibilities on Federal Aviation,” March 6, 2023  
DoD Directive 5135.02, “Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (USD(A&S)),” July 15, 2020  
DoD Instruction 4500.53, “DoD Commercial Air Transportation Quality and Safety Review Program,” May 7, 2021  
DoD Instruction 4540.01, “Use of International Airspace by U.S. Military Aircraft and for Missile and Projectile Firings,” June 2, 2015, as amended  
DoD Instruction 5000.88, “Engineering of Defense Systems,” November 18, 2020  
DoD Instruction 5015.02, “DoD Records Management Program,” February 24, 2015, as amended  
DoD Manual 8180.01, “Information Technology Planning for Electronic records Management,” August 4, 2023  
Military Handbook MIL-HDBK-516C, “Department of Defense Handbook: Airworthiness Certification Criteria,” December 12, 2014  
Military Standard MIL-STD-882E, “Department of Defense Standard Practice: System Safety,” May 11, 2012, as amended  
Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment Memorandum, “Flight in Foreign-Owned Military Aircraft Implementation Guidance,” December 1, 2020<sup>1</sup>  
United States Code, Title 10  
United States Code, Title 44  
United States Code, Title 49

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<sup>1</sup> Authorized users can request a copy of the memorandum by contacting the OUSD(A&S) Executive Correspondence Office (<https://www.acq.osd.mil/contact-us.html> or [osd.pentagon.ousd-a-s.mbx.as-eco@mail.mil](mailto:osd.pentagon.ousd-a-s.mbx.as-eco@mail.mil)).