

ACS MANEUVER TOLERANCES

FAA-S-ACS-6C · November 2023

Every numeric standard in the private pilot ACS, by Area of Operation, each with the element code a CFI and a DPE both cite. In the ACS's own notation — including the asymmetric ones, which are the point: **slow flight is +10/-0 knots and emergency descent is +0/-10**, opposite senses, one of each in the whole document.

1 · III — AIRPORT OPERATIONS

1 task **FAA GUIDANCE**

Traffic patterns PA.III.B.S5
±100 feet · ±10 knots

2 · IV — TAKEOFFS, LANDINGS, AND GO-AROUNDS

8 tasks **FAA GUIDANCE**

Normal takeoff & climb PA.IV.A.S11, S13

V_Y +10/-5 knots

Normal approach & landing PA.IV.B.S7, S10

approach speed (or not more than $1.3 V_{SO}$) +10/-5 knots, gust factor applied · touch down within 400 feet beyond or on the specified point

Soft-field takeoff & climb PA.IV.C.S10, S12

V_X / V_Y +10/-5 knots

Soft-field approach & landing PA.IV.D.S7

+10/-5 knots, gust factor applied

CHECKRIDE TRAP **TECHNIQUE** No touchdown-distance standard. Sheets that print “within 200 feet” for soft-field are inventing it.

Short-field takeoff & climb PA.IV.E.S9–S11, S13

V_X +10/-5 knots until the obstacle is cleared or until the airplane is 50 feet above the surface · then V_Y +10/-5 knots

Short-field approach & landing PA.IV.F.S7, S10

+10/-5 knots, gust factor applied · touch down within 200 feet beyond or on the specified point

Forward slip to a landing PA.IV.M.S8

touch down within 400 feet beyond or on the specified point

No airspeed standard.

Go-around / rejected landing PA.IV.N.S4, S7

V_X / V_Y +10/-5 knots

3 · V — PERFORMANCE AND GROUND REFERENCE MANEUVERS

2 tasks **FAA GUIDANCE**

Steep turns PA.V.A.S3, S5

approximately a 45° bank · ±100 feet · ±10 knots · bank ±5° · roll out on the entry heading ±10°

Ground reference maneuvers PA.V.B.S3a–c, S7

enter 600 to 1,000 feet AGL · ±100 feet · ±10 knots

4 · VI — NAVIGATION

2 tasks **FAA GUIDANCE**

Pilotage & dead reckoning PA.VI.A.S5, S6, S7

verify position within three nautical miles of the flight-planned route · arrive within five minutes of the ETA · ±200 feet · heading ±15°

Navigation systems · Diversion PA.VI.B.S7, PA.VI.C.S3

±200 feet · heading ±15°

5 · VII — SLOW FLIGHT AND STALLS

3 tasks **FAA GUIDANCE**

Maneuvering during slow flight PA.VII.A.S2, S5

complete no lower than 1,500 feet AGL · ±100 feet · heading ±10° · airspeed +10/-0 knots · bank ±10°

Power-off stalls PA.VII.B.S2, S6

complete no lower than 1,500 feet AGL · heading ±10° if straight · bank not to exceed 20°, ±10° if in turning flight

No altitude-loss standard for the recovery. ACS Appendix 3 says evaluation criteria “should not mandate a predetermined value for altitude loss”.

Power-on stalls PA.VII.C.S2, S4, S6

complete no lower than 1,500 feet AGL · no less than 65 percent power · heading ±10° if straight · bank not to exceed 20°, ±10° if in turning flight

6 · VIII — BASIC INSTRUMENT MANEUVERS

2 tasks **FAA GUIDANCE**

Straight-and-level · Constant-airspeed climbs · Descents PA.VIII.A.S2, B.S3, C.S3

±200 feet · heading ±20° · ±10 knots

Turns to headings PA.VIII.D.S1

±200 feet · standard rate turn · roll out on the assigned heading ±10° · ±10 knots

Emergency descent PA.IX.A.S4, S5

bank angle between 30° and 45° · airspeed +0/-10 knots · level off ±100 feet

Emergency approach & landing (simulated) PA.IX.B.S1

best glide airspeed ±10 knots

CHECKRIDE TRAP **TECHNIQUE** **THREE CELLS THE CHEAT SHEETS GET WRONG** each one checkable

Instrument turns are ±10°, not ±20°. Straight-and-level, climbs and descents (VIII.A/B/C) allow heading ±20°. Turns to headings (VIII.D) is tighter: roll out on the assigned heading ±10°. The two are one page apart in the ACS and are routinely printed as one row.

PA.VIII.A.S2, B.S3, C.S3 vs PA.VIII.D.S1

+10/-0 and +0/-10 are opposite, and each appears exactly once. Slow flight allows airspeed +10/-0 knots — you may be fast, never slow. Emergency descent allows +0/-10 knots — you may be slow, never fast. Normalising either to ±10 inverts a real standard. Across the whole ACS there is one of each, plus 25 elements at +10/-5.

PA.VII.A.S5 vs PA.IX.A.S5

Steep turns is “approximately” 45°, and ±5° is the maintenance tolerance. S3 says establish approximately a 45° bank. S5 says maintain bank ±5°. Printing “45° ±5°” as the entry standard merges an instruction with a tolerance.

PA.V.A.S3 vs PA.V.A.S5

CHECKRIDE TRAP **TECHNIQUE** **NUMBERS THIS SHEET WILL NOT PRINT** because the ACS does not contain them

- A touchdown distance for soft-field, glassy-water or rough-water landings. Four tasks carry one: normal (400 feet), short-field (200 feet), forward slip (400 feet), and — for seaplanes — confined area (200 feet).
- An altitude loss for stall recovery. ACS Appendix 3 affirmatively says evaluation criteria should not mandate a predetermined value for altitude loss.
- A crosswind number. The ACS states none; the limit is your POH’s maximum demonstrated crosswind component, which is a demonstrated value, not a limitation.
- A takeoff-distance tolerance. No such standard exists in 6C.

A sheet that fills these in looks more useful and is less true. If a number matters to you and it is not here, it is because it is in your POH or in your instructor’s judgement, not in the standard.

Standard. FAA-S-ACS-6C, Private Pilot for Airplane Category Airman Certification Standards, edition **November 2023**, effective May 31, 2024, incorporated by reference at 14 CFR 61.14(b)(3). Extracted from the FAA’s own PDF, SHA-256 46ed6625723b0b7f..., re-downloaded and byte-compared against faa.gov on 2026-08-31. “April 2024” is the FAA’s posting date, not the edition.

Why that edition line is checkable. Because the ACS is incorporated by reference into 14 CFR 61.14, the FAA cannot revise it without a Federal Register rulemaking — so “is this still current?” has a documentary answer rather than a guess. Verified 2026-08-31: no FAA-S-ACS-6D exists, and no rule has amended 61.14(b)(3).

This is a study aid, not the standard. The ACS itself is the standard and your DPE evaluates against it. Check the current revision before you rely on any number here.