



AFW Command Pilot Mission Checklist

This check list is to be used as a guide for Angel Flight West Command Pilots. It contains four sections: Initial Passenger Contact, Passenger Pickup, Passenger Drop-off, and a list of required and optional items to be carried in the aircraft. At the end there is an Expanded Check List with additional comments and details on each item in each section.

These are examples for your use. Feel free to add or modify as fits your requirements.

Initial Passenger Contact

Please call your passenger as soon as you receive your mission sheet. Use the following items to ensure you've covered all of the important topics:

1. Introduction and verify/exchange phone/cell numbers and e-mail addresses.
Have a contact phone number for the day of the mission
2. Verify departure time /appointment time and date. (when do they need to arrive at the destination?)
3. Inquire about passenger's flying and/or "angel flight" experience
4. Inquire about special needs (oxygen, wheelchair, etc)
5. Verify weight, companions and their weight, and remind passengers of baggage weight and size limits
6. Discuss meeting time and place, FBO telephone number, address, etc..
Alternate airports discussed if appropriate
7. Discuss destination location, telephone number, etc.
8. Remind passengers of waiver requirement
9. Set flight expectations (ETE, weather, etc)
10. Remind passengers re: lack of toilet facilities. (don't drink coffee/tea...)
11. Prepare passenger for in-flight comfort. Bring/if desired: sweater, coat, gloves, sun glasses, reading material, etc.
12. Address any safety concerns or other anxieties

13. Verify lodging and/or ground transportation arrangements
14. Discuss alternatives (Alternate airports? Possible cancellation)
15. Ask about any further questions
16. Establish date and time for a final coordination call
17. Inform Angel Flight West office of ANY changes or additions to information.
If there are ANY last minute changes to any part of the mission, including number of passengers, weights, luggage, departure/arrival times, etc, please notify HQ immediately. Even if you and your aircraft can handle the changes, the return pilot or linking pilot might not be able to.

Note: On linking missions, the above should be accomplished by the first pilot in the chain. He or she should then call the second pilot in the chain and exchange information re the passenger, time and place of link-up, telephone numbers and call signs, etc. If there is a third leg, the second leg pilot should contact the third leg pilot, etc. Direct contact of passengers by second and subsequent leg link pilots is optional.

Day of Flight

1. Weather conditions, more precise flight time
2. File Flight Plans
3. Contact Passenger, verify their condition for flight, communicate current weather conditions and revised ETE.

Passenger Pickup

Since many passengers may be nervous flyers, even those that have flown many times, the more “professional” and experienced the Command Pilot and the Mission Assistant look, the more likely the passenger is to be comfortable. There are a few things that you can do to help ensure their mental comfort. First, dress professionally and ensure that the aircraft is clean and the interior uncluttered. Second, arrive early and be waiting when the passenger arrives. Next, greet them in a friendly and professional way and complete the paperwork in a professional manner. Allow enough time from the scheduled meeting time until the flight is to depart so that the pre-flight time is unhurried. Plan to depart at a scheduled time and meet that schedule.

1. Have them sign the Waiver

Depending upon circumstances have them sign either one or two waivers

2. Hand out AFW material/boarding form
3. Obtain pictures if desirable

4. Escort them to the aircraft after a short briefing about ramp safety
5. Complete a thorough preflight briefing

GA Aircraft / passenger intro – if necessary

Weather

Particulars of this mission (forecast weather, ETE, etc.)

What is expected or desired of them - terminal (sterile cockpit)/en route

What to do if they have problems or issues

6. Open IFR/VFR flight plan and/or use Flight Following

Passenger Drop-off

1. Assist them in deplaning if necessary
2. Ensure that all of their belongings have been removed from the aircraft
3. Escort them off the ramp and to their transportation if necessary
4. Confirm transportation is available
5. If you are also providing their return flight, verify time, place, etc.
6. Complete the Mission Report Form

Airplane - Items to be Carried

1. Pilot license, medical, etc
2. Handheld GPS and/or NavComm
3. Instrument, en route chart, high altitude charts
4. Sectionals/WACs/TAC chart
5. Airport guides
6. Headsets
7. Clipboard/Knee Board
8. Camera
9. Boarding Stool?
10. Passenger Comfort
 - Relief packages/bottle(s)
 - Air sickness bags
 - Blankets
 - Headsets/non-aviation headsets if desired/ear plugs
 - Angel Flight West Information handout
 - Video player and videos
 - Water or other refreshments

Don't forget your Angel Flight West material. Some pilots carry and/or wear:

1. Binder (with mission form, multistage plan, flight plans, etc).
2. AFW Badge
3. AFW Shirt and/or Jacket
4. Business Cards
5. Handout (Angel Flight West)

Expanded Checklist

Initial Passenger Contact

1. Introduction

Introduce yourself as their "angel flight" pilot, provide your contact information, verify current and obtain any additional contact information (e.g. home/work/cell numbers) for passengers. Verify their email address -- and whether they use email -- because email can be an easy way to provide the FBO's address, directions, and even a map. If they have e-mail address and it is not on your mission form, please contact the AFW with the information.

2. Verify Departure Time and Date

Make sure that your pick-up time, ETE, travel time at the destination, etc., meets the requirements of the appointment time. If the flight is to an appointment, make certain that the estimated arrival time will allow for any wait time and ground transportation. If it is a return flight, make sure the passengers are realistic about what time they will be available to depart. On afternoon flights, make sure there is plenty of time to go to the passengers' destination, and return before dark, if necessary.

3. Inquire Regarding Passenger's Flight Experience

If the passengers have flown an "angel flight" before, and/or are experienced with general aviation aircraft there is not much to say. However, if the passengers have never flown in a small plane, or even flown at all, some detailed explanations and assurances are in order. Are they prone to motion sickness? What is their anxiety level regarding flight in a small plane? If the passenger exhibits severe anxiety, suggest they contact their MD to discuss the issue.

Don't recommend any motion sickness medications, due to possible interactions with other medications. You might mention the use of products containing ginger: Ginger ale, ginger snaps, candied ginger, ginger tablets. It isn't a medication, has no side effects, and is generally available. You can even bring a ginger ale along. If stronger medication (i.e., Dramamine, Bonine, etc) is required, have them check with their physician.

4. Determine if They Have Special Needs

Ensure that, if the passengers have special needs, you and the aircraft can accommodate those needs. Are they mobile enough to board the aircraft? Leg and hip problems, for example, can make emplaning and deplaning some low wing aircraft difficult or impossible. Will a wheelchair fit in the baggage compartment or behind the seats? If they require oxygen, that should be shown on the mission information form. You need to decide whether you are willing to let them use their own oxygen on board the airplane. If they have oxygen, check that the system is approved. Several manufacturers of oxygen concentrators are now approved by the FAA. These systems don't contain pressurized oxygen. They should ensure they have adequate battery power for the length of the flight. Airlines require power available for double the expected flight time.

5. Communicate Passenger and Weight Limits

Remind your passenger of the number of people scheduled to fly per your mission form and the maximum weight and size of the luggage that they are permitted to bring. Occasionally passengers ask if a friend or relative, not on the mission sheet, may go along, and/or ask about additional baggage weight allowance. Make sure you coordinate any additional baggage or passengers with Angel Flight West prior to accepting them. Even if your aircraft can handle the load, the next pilot on a linking mission and/or the return flight pilot may not be able to do so.

6. Determine Meeting Time and Place

When you establish a meeting time and place, make sure you agree on a specific airport and FBO or other location. If they've flown AFW before, they may already have a preference. Passengers may not know what an FBO is, so be prepared to describe the location so they understand. Provide the address and the FBO's telephone number so the passengers can call for directions. If possible, email them the address, phone numbers, directions, and/or a map showing the FBO's location relative to a familiar landmark. If the pickup point is in another time zone, make sure you are clear about the local time at which you will meet the passengers. If there is any possibility of being required to meet at a different airport (e.g. weather concerns), have this discussion during the initial call.

7. Determine Destination Time and Location

Make sure the passenger understands which airport is the planned destination and which FBO, expected time of arrival, etc.. Give them the FBO's address and telephone number in case their ground transportation needs to call for directions. In case weather or some other issue becomes a problem, discuss the possibility landing at an alternate airport. If there is any chance of a diversion, agree on what alternate airports will work for them just in case.

8. Explain Waiver of Liability Requirement

Make sure the passenger understands the requirement to sign a waiver before the flight. Tell them they may be asked to sign two copies of the same document.

9. Set Flight Expectations

Give the passenger an overview of the flight, especially the ETE. If possible, tell them the expected weather conditions, temperature in the airplane, etc.. This helps passengers prepare for the flight.

10. Explain There are Limited Toilet Facilities

Remind the passengers of the lack of toilet facilities. Suggest they eat a solid meal before the flight, but limit their consumption of liquids, particularly diuretics such as coffee, tea, and caffeinated soft drinks. Note: consider carrying a small urinal, including an attachment for female use, onboard the plane. There are also disposable urinal pouches that are available through pilot stores.

11. Prepare Passenger for In-flight Comfort

Provide a list of items that they might want to bring for their comfort. Items might include, sweater, coat, gloves, hat, sun glasses, reading material, pillow, blanket, etc.. For children and long flights, consider bringing or telling them to bring a (charged) portable DVD player and DVDs.

12. Answer Safety Concerns

Particularly with passengers who have not flown before or have limited experience in small planes, it may be necessary to address their safety concerns. You'll provide details for them during your safety briefing at the airplane, but this might be a good time to review some of the basic tenets (especially ramp safety) and to answer any of their questions. But sure to ask if they have questions because they may be afraid to ask.

13. Verify Lodging and/or Ground Transportation

Make sure that lodging and ground transportation arrangements have been made, that they are correct, and that they are firm. If there is any doubt, or if the passengers do not know about lodging or ground transportation arrangements, call Angel Flight West headquarters or the Social Worker who requested the flight. If you cannot contact the Social Worker, or he or she does not have lodging or ground transportation arrangements, call AFW before agreeing to the flight. Do not agree to a mission if the possibility exists that you may have to drop the passenger off with no transportation and no place to stay. **Although you may choose to assist passengers with lodging and/or ground transportation, that is not your responsibility.**

14. Discuss Alternate Plans

Make sure the passengers understand the possibility that the mission may be canceled due to weather, mechanical problems, or other reasons. They may choose to arrange alternate travel plans, or they may choose to reschedule their appointments. That is up to the passengers and the Social Workers. Remind passengers if they need to cancel or change their plans they must call the pilot and the Angel Flight West Office at 1-888-426-2643.

15. Ask if They Have Additional Questions

Give the passengers the opportunity to raise any other questions or concerns. Make sure they know how to contact you if anything else occurs to them.

16. Plan the Final Coordination Call

Always arrange for a time and date for a final coordination telephone call. Normally, that should be after you have filed your flight plan, and checked weather the evening before the mission. Even at that point, there may still be doubt about the weather. If so, tell the passengers that you will contact them again immediately before take-off time. Make sure you have their mobile telephone number or other contact number, if available, in case they need to be contacted en route to or at the meeting place. If available, carry the phone number for the destinations ATIS/AWOS/ASOS so you can check the destination's weather before departure.

Day of Flight

1. Weather conditions, NOTAMS, TFRs, more precise flight time, etc...

Plan to get a preflight briefing before the initial leg and before each subsequent leg of the flight should conditions warrant. You should then revisit your planning to determine a revised estimated flight time.

2. File Flight Plan

Angel Flight West strongly recommends filing IFR or VFR flight plans. If VFR, you should also request Flight Following. Flight Following can provide a helpful resource should you need assistance (e.g. the passenger becomes ill).

3. Contact Passenger, verify their condition for flight, communicate forecast weather conditions and revised ETE

Use this final contact to confirm passenger's availability and condition to fly and to update them on the forecast weather conditions and revised ETE. If conditions so warrant, this would be the appropriate time to discuss the possibility or requirement for alternate destination airports to be used as the destination.

Passenger Pickup

1. Have Them Sign the Waiver of Liability

Depending upon the situation, have them sign either one or two copies of the liability waiver. If there is no place to mail a copy to AFW, leave one somewhere obvious (e.g. self service credit card machine or under a rock at the end of a hangar), call Angel Flight West HQ and call to tell them where you left it. Carry the second waiver to be mailed later.

2. Hand Out AFW Material/Boarding Form

Some Command Pilots hand out the boarding form with their name and contact information. Alternately you could seal them in plastic and use them like airline information cards.

3. Obtain Pictures if Possible

If the passenger agrees and signs the photo release on the Liability Waiver, please try to obtain pictures of the passengers for AFW's use.

4. After a Short Briefing on Ramp Safety Escort Them to the Aircraft

Tell them to remain near you on the ramp and to be aware of other aircraft. Tell them to be especially aware of propellers, both the invisible turning types and even those that aren't turning. Children should be particularly monitored because they are prone to wander or run off.

Many passengers may need assistance in carrying their belongings. Passengers also may need help in boarding the aircraft. Low wing aircraft are particularly difficult for people with leg and hip problems. Consider carrying a small (collapsible) stool to help them climb onto the wing or step.

5. Complete a Thorough Preflight Briefing

The FARs require a thorough safety briefing. Consider spending a few minutes talking about basic aircraft flight controls. Many people subscribe to the movie and TV perpetuated myth that if the engine stops an airplane immediately dives toward the ground. This would be a good time to dispel that myth by explaining that an airplane whose engine has stopped is simply a glider.

The safety briefing should cover all of the normal items (seat belts, door operations, emergency equipment, etc.. In addition, explain your expectations regarding when they can talk (e.g. sterile cockpit during take-offs and landings), ask questions, etc and what hand signals you will use (e.g. to inform them when you are talking with ATC). Tell them the things they can do to help (e.g. look for other aircraft) and how they communicate with you should they have any problems.

This would be a good time to reiterate the expected flight time, expected weather conditions, etc. and anything else that might make the flight more pleasant for them.

6. Open IFR/VFR Flight Plan and/or Use Flight Following

AFW recommends that on any mission in which you are carrying a passenger, you should either file a flight plan (IFR or VFR) or at least use Flight Following.

Passenger Drop-off

1. Assist in Deplaning if Necessary

Always ask passengers if they want assistance in deplaning and assist your passengers when necessary. A small stool can be very helpful in assisting a passenger in deplaning. You should be prepared to assist in case they have problems.

2. Ensure That All Belongings are Taken

Remind your passenger to collect all of their belongings. Medications left behind could create a major medical problem for someone. Ensure that you unload any of their belongings that might have been carried in the luggage compartment.

3. Escort Passengers From Ramp to Their Transportation

Just as with boarding, make sure your passenger(s) are monitored when deplaning and leaving the ramp area. If they need help, assist them to their transportation.

4. Confirm Transportation is Available

Ensure that their ground transportation is covered. This isn't usually a problem, but occasionally the ball gets dropped. Remember that sometimes their physical and emotional problems impact their coping skills, so we need to be prepared to help them in any way we can.

5. If You are Providing Return Flight, Verify Time, Place, etc.

Confirm expected departure time and location. Appointments can run late, verify you have a method of communicating with them and/or visa versa.

6. Complete the Mission Report Form

The mission isn't complete until the paperwork has been completed. Please complete the report as soon as possible.

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Airplane - Items to be Carried

1. Pilot license, medical, etc
2. Handheld GPS and/or NavComm
3. Instrument, enroute chart, high altitude charts
4. Sectionals/WACs
5. Airport guides
6. Headsets
7. Clipboard/Knee Board
8. Camera
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