not significantly contribute to maintaining instrument proficiency. The petitioner also states that 6 hours is an economic burden to many pilots and encourages pilots "to fly while not legally current." The petitioner states that aircraft control combined with the complex demands of following approach plates and communicating with ATC are much more germane to IFR proficiency. Therefore, the petitioner states, the number of required approaches should be increased. The petitioner states that 10 or 12 approaches could be conducted in 2 hours of flight time.

One comment was submitted in response to that petition. In that comment, the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) stated that the present regulation does not ensure proficiency, because a pilot may take an instrument proficiency test and not fly in instrument conditions for up to 6 months but still be legally current.

The petitioner raises an important issue in focusing on the quality of the time spent in instrument flight, especially simulated instrument flight, although the FAA disagrees that the current regulation encourages pilots to disregard the FAR and fly illegally. Therefore, the FAA proposes to revise the instrument recency of experience requirements. Under the proposal, to act as PIC under IFR, or in weather conditions less than the minimums prescribed for VFR, within the preceding 6 calendar months for aircraft other than gliders, a pilot would be required to have performed and logged: (1) At least six precision instrument approaches; (2) at least six nonprecision instrument approaches, (3) holding procedures; (4) intercepting and tracking VOR radials and NDB bearings; (5) recovery from unusual flight attitudes; and (6) flight by reference to instruments. However, these maneuvers and procedures would not be required to be performed in actual or simulated instrument flight. No minimum number of hours of simulated or actual instrument flight time would be specified.

Proposed § 61.1a would define an instrument approach as an approach procedure defined in part 97 and conducted to an established minimum descent altitude (MDA) or decision height (DH), or if necessary, to a higher altitude selected for safety reasons by ATC. Part 97 prescribes Standard Instrument Approach Procedures (SIAP) for instrument letdown to airports in the United States.

These proposed requirements could be met either in actual flight and in the category of aircraft for which instrument privileges are sought, or in an approved flight simulator or flight training device representative of the category of aircraft for which instrument privileges are sought.

Instrument recency of experience in gliders would change mainly in format under the proposal. Pilots would be required to perform and log at least 3 hours of instrument time in actual flight, of which at least one-half must have been in a glider or single-engine airplane if the pilot does not carry passengers. If the pilot does carry passengers, the pilot must have performed and logged at least 3 hours of instrument time in a glider.

The FAA also proposes to clarify the requirements for an instrument proficiency test. Currently, the instrument proficiency test would be required for a person who has not met the instrument recency requirements within the prescribed time or within 6 calendar months after that time. The FAA proposes to clarify this issue by amending § 61.57 to require that the test include a representative number of tasks required for original certification of an instrument rating.

The FAA issued an NPRM on April 11, 1994 (59 FR 17162) to waive the recency of experience requirements of § 61.57 for PICs of parts 121 and 135 operators. Specifically, that NPRM proposed relief to PICs of parts 121 and 135 operators from having to comply with the recency of experience requirements, (i.e., general, night, and instrument) of § 61.57. Parts 121 and 135 have recency of experience requirements that are at least equivalent to the recency of experience requirements of § 61.57, so duplication of these requirements are unnecessary. The final rule is scheduled for issuance in 1994.

The proposals in this NPRM would extend the exception requirements for the general and night recency experience requirements of § 61.57 to PICs of part 125 operators, but not the instrument recency experience requirements. The FAA believes the training programs and structured operational controls placed on PICs in part 125 operations are adequate in ensuring that there will not be a degradation in safety. The FAA believes that the redundant recency of experience requirements in part 125, in addition to the structured training programs and operational controls placed on PICs of part 125 operators more than adequately cover any safety concerns provided by exempting these PICs from the recency of experience requirements of § 61.57.

20. English Language Ability Requirements

The FAA proposes to standardize English language fluency requirements for all certificates and ratings and to eliminate exceptions in certain rules that permit pilots to be certificated without meeting English language fluency requirements, under certain restrictions.

The proposal to eliminate exceptions to the English language requirements would affect all pilot and flight instructor applicants. This proposal would be addressed in each of the eligibility paragraphs of each pilot certificate level and would require all applicants to be able to read, speak, and understand the English language. Under the proposal, the reference to operating limitations would be deleted, and all applicants would be required to meet the language requirements. A similar provision in current § 61.75, which provides for placement of limitations on a pilot certificate issued on the basis of a foreign pilot license, also would be deleted. As with the pilot certificates and ratings, the applicant for a U.S. pilot certificate, on the basis of a foreign pilot license, would have to be able to read, speak, write, and understand the English language.

The FAA has grown increasingly concerned that pilots' inability to sufficiently read, speak, and understand English during radio communication and in dealing with air traffic control poses a serious safety hazard. The exceptions referred to have not effectively kept such pilots out of airspace in which command of the English language is essential, and for safety reasons, the FAA believes all pilots who operate in the National Airspace System (NAS) should meet the English language requirements. Current holders who cannot read, speak, write, and understand the English language, but have been issued pilot certificates with limitations that restrict operations in airspace requiring the use of the English language prior to effective date of this rule would be allowed to continue to hold that certificate. If the person seeks an additional rating or higher level pilot certificate, then the certificate will not be issued unless the person is able to read, speak, write, and understand the English language.

The proposal would eliminate, as superfluous, current language in § 61.151 that requires applicants for the ATP certificate to speak English without accent or speech impediment that would interfere with two-way radio conversation. The FAA believes that the requirement to speak English means