

## SECTION 4

### STUDIES ON THE AGE 60 RULE

FAA regularly reexamines the Age 60 Rule because the agency needs to evaluate medical and scientific advances that might affect the Rule and because exemption requests and challenges to the Rule continually occur. FAA also conducts medical research on the human factors affecting aviation safety, since FAA is responsible for promoting the flight safety of civil aircraft in air commerce. Since 1960, one study--by NIA--resulted in FAA's taking preliminary rulemaking action to assess the feasibility of amending the Age 60 Rule.

### FAA'S REEXAMINATION OF THE MEDICAL AND SCIENTIFIC VALIDITY OF THE AGE 60 RULE

As FAA files dating from the 1970s through the present indicate, FAA officials have prepared option papers that considered alternatives to the Age 60 Rule. Some alternatives that FAA has considered are

- granting exemptions to individual pilots whenever it can be shown medically that the petitioners will be able to adequately perform beyond the age of 60;
- changing the age limitation to a higher age, such as 62 or 65; and
- maintaining the Age 60 Rule as it currently exists and granting no exemptions until FAA identifies test methods that can measure degradation in performance and adequately identify individuals subject to incapacitation.

FAA has consistently followed the third alternative.

In rejecting alternatives to the Age 60 Rule, FAA has relied on both internal studies and studies by other agencies and organizations dealing with gerontology, degenerative diseases, physiological and psychological changes, and the pilot population in comparison with the general population. The major studies include the Thousand Aviators Study, originated by the Department of the Navy, 1940s-1980s; the Georgetown Clinical Research Institute study, 1960s; the Lovelace Foundation studies, 1960s; Study of the Age 60 Rule, by R. L. Bohannon, 1969; Psychophysiological Effects of Aging: Developing a Functional Age Index for Pilots, by S. J. Gerathewohl, 1970s; A Reassessment of the Rationale for the Establishment of Federal Aviation Regulation, 14 CFR 121.383(c), by Goddard and Associates, 1979; and The Influence of Total Flight Time, Recent Flight Time and Age on Pilot Accident Rates, by R. Golaszewski, 1983.