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STUDENT PILOT GUIDE



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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION
Flight Standards Service

FOREWORD

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) invites you to join the general aviation community of pilots. It is a community of civil aviation operations other than those air carriers holding a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity. General aviation makes up approximately 96 percent of U.S. aircraft and 60 percent of U.S. flight hours flown. General aviation is often misunderstood as only small, propeller-driven aircraft. A large jet or cargo plane operated under Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 91 can be a general aviation aircraft.

This publication is intended to serve as a guide for prospective student pilots and for those already engaged in flight training. This guide presents in “how to” fashion, general procedures for obtaining FAA student pilot, sport pilot, recreational pilot, and private pilot certificates.

There are many references to FAA Flight Standards District Offices (FSDOs) and through the FSDOs, contact is maintained between the FAA and the general aviation public. The FAA inspectors at your local FSDO are professionally trained and are prepared to advise and assist you toward reaching your goal as a pilot.

FAA-H-8083-27A supersedes FAA-H-8083-27, Student Pilot Guide, dated 1999.

This handbook may be purchased from the Superintendent of documents, U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO), Washington DC 20402-9325, or from GPO’s web site.

<http://bookstore.gpo.gov>

This handbook is also available for download, in pdf format, from the Regulatory Support Division’s web site.

http://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/avs/offices/afs/afs600

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Comments regarding this publication should be sent, in e-mail form, to AFS630comments@faa.gov.

We urge you to visit your local FSDO and feel free to ask for advice on any matters relating to general aviation.

Welcome to aviation.

/s/ 3/8/2006

Joseph K. Tintera, Manager,
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INTRODUCTION

Before you begin flight training, it is important to have a basic understanding of the responsibilities, safety regulations, and issues applicable to such an endeavor. This includes the choice of a flight school, selected study materials, study habits, and the role of the instructor, student, and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Role of the FAA

Congress empowered the FAA to foster aviation safety by prescribing safety standards for civil aviation. This is accomplished through the Code of Federal Regulations (CFRs).

Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 61 pertains to the certification of pilots, flight instructors, and ground instructors. This prescribes the eligibility, aeronautical knowledge, flight proficiency, and experience required for each type of pilot certificate issued.

Flight Standards District Offices (FSDOs)

Throughout the world, the FAA has approximately 100 Flight Standards District Offices and International Field Offices, commonly referred to as “FSDOs” and “IFOs.” Through these offices, information and services are provided for the aviation community. In the U.S., FSDO phone numbers are listed in the blue pages of the telephone directory under United States Government Offices, Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration. A listing of FSDOs by state/region is available on the FAA’s website at http://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/field_offices/fsdo/.

Most Frequently Asked Questions

The Most Frequently Asked Questions section on page 8 of this guide, lists typical questions, with answers, asked by student pilots. If your question is not answered, we suggest that you contact your local FSDO. The FSDO will be able to furnish current information regarding changes in procedures or revisions to regulations.

Choosing a Flight School

Most airports have facilities for flight training conducted by flight schools or individual flight instructors. A school will usually provide a wide variety of training material, special facilities, and greater flexibility in scheduling. Many colleges and universities also provide flight training as a part of their curricula.

There are two types of flight schools catering to primary general aviation needs. One is normally referred to as a certificated “part 141 school” and the other as a “part 61 school.” A part 141 school has been granted an Air Agency Certificate by the FAA: The certificated schools may qualify for a ground school rating and a flight school rating. In addition, the school may be authorized to give their graduates practical (flight) tests and knowledge (computer administered written) tests. Information on flight schools is available on the FAA’s website at http://www.faa.gov/training_testing/schools/.

A list of commercial airman knowledge testing centers is available on the FAA's website at http://www.faa.gov/training_testing/testing/media/test_centers.pdf.

Enrollment in a certificated school usually ensures quality and continuity of training. These schools meet prescribed standards with respect to equipment, facilities, personnel, and curricula. Many excellent flight schools find it impractical to qualify for the FAA part 141 certificate and are referred to as part 61 schools. One difference between a part 141 school and a part 61 school is that fewer flight hours are required to qualify for a pilot certificate in a part 141 certificated school. The requirement for a private pilot certificate is 40 hours in a part 61 school and 35 hours in a part 141 certificated school. This difference may be insignificant for a private pilot certificate because the national average indicates most pilots require 60 to 75 hours of flight training.

The FSDO will provide information on the location of pilot training facilities in your area. A current file is maintained on all schools within each FSDO's district. You make the decision on where to obtain flight training. You may want to make a checklist of things to look for in a school. Talking to pilots and reading articles in flight magazines can help you in making your checklist and in the evaluation of a training facility.

Your choice of a flight school might depend on whether you are planning to obtain a sport pilot certificate, recreational pilot certificate, private pilot certificate, or whether you intend to pursue a career as a professional pilot. Another consideration is whether you will train part time or full time.

Do not make the mistake of making your determination based on financial concerns alone. The quality of training you receive is very important. Prior to making a final decision, visit the school you are considering, and talk with management, instructors, and students. Evaluate the items on the checklist you developed, and then take time to think things over before making your decision.

Ground and flight training should be obtained as regularly and frequently as possible. This assures maximum retention of instruction and the achievement of requisite proficiency.

The Role of the Instructor

The student pilot's training program depends upon the quality of the ground and flight training received. An instructor should possess an understanding of the learning process, a knowledge of the fundamentals of teaching, and the ability to communicate effectively with the student pilot. During the certification process, a flight instructor applicant is tested on a practical application of these skills in specific teaching situations. The quality of instruction, and the knowledge and skills acquired from your flight instructor will affect your entire flying career whether you plan to pursue it as a vocation or an avocation.

What Flight Training Requires

A course of instruction should include the ground and flight training necessary to acquire the knowledge and skills required to safely and efficiently function as a certificated pilot. Whether you attend a part 141 or part 61 school or obtain the services of an individual flight instructor, the specific knowledge and skill areas for each category and class of aircraft are outlined in Title

14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR). Refer to 14 CFR part 61, subpart J for the requirements of a sport pilot certificate. Refer to 14 CFR part 61, subpart D for the requirements of a recreational pilot certificate. Refer to 14 CFR part 61, subpart E for the requirements of a private pilot certificate.

Instructor and Student Relationship

The FAA has adopted an operational training concept that places the full responsibility for student training on the flight instructor. In this role, the flight instructor assumes total responsibility for training you to meet the standards required for certification within an ever-changing operating environment.

Like anything else in life, the more you educated yourself and are aware of what is expected of you and others, the more control you have of your goal's outcome. Research the avenues open to you. Get impartial opinions of the flight school and/or instructor you intend to employ.

The flight instructor will provide you guidance, and arrange for your academic and flight training lessons. These lessons are presented in a logical manner to achieve desired goals. After each flight, the flight instructor will review the day's lesson. This will be the time to clear up any questions. It is important that misconceptions be clarified while the subject is still fresh in mind.

Medical Requirements

Pilots, except those who fly gliders or free air balloons, must possess a valid medical certificate in order to exercise the privileges of their airman certificates. Sport pilots must possess either a valid third-class medical certificate or a valid driver's license.

The periodic medical examination required for medical certification is conducted by designated aviation medical examiners, who are physicians with a special interest in aviation safety and have training in aviation medicine.

The standards for medical certification are contained in 14 CFR part 67. The requirements for obtaining medical certification are contained in 14CFR part 61.

Prior to beginning flight training, a flight instructor should interview you about any health conditions and determine your goal as a pilot. Good advice would be to obtain the class of medical certificate required, for the certificate level you ultimately want, before beginning flight training. Finding out immediately whether you are medically qualified could save time and money.

If you do have physical limitations, such as impaired vision, loss of a limb, or hearing impairment it is possible you could be issued a medical certificate valid for "Student Pilot Privileges Only." This kind of medical certificate will allow you to continue flight training and to prepare for the pilot certification practical test. During training, flight instructors should ensure that you can safely perform all required Tasks that pertain to the required standards. Special devices may be necessary to allow you to manipulate the flight controls. If you are unable to perform certain Tasks, you may have a limitation placed on your pilot certificate. For example, hearing impairment would require the limitation "Not Valid for Flight Requiring the Use of Radio." Another limitation may allow the pilot to only operate a certain make and model airplane, such as one without rudder pedals.

You should obtain a copy of the practical test standard appropriate to the pilot certificate that you plan to acquire. This will enable you to know exactly what is expected on the practical test. Practical test standards can be obtained from the FAA's Airman Testing website at http://www.faa.gov/training_testing/testing/test_standards/.

MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

General

1. Q: Is it difficult to fly an aircraft?

A: No. It is not particularly difficult. As a beginning student pilot, you will do most of the actual flying (handling the controls of the aircraft).

2. Q: When may I begin to fly?

A: Immediately. However, you will need to apply for certain certificates, as described in this guide, in preparation for solo flight.

3. Q: Is flying safe?

A: A well-built and maintained aircraft, flown by a competent and prudent pilot, makes flying as safe or safer than many other forms of transportation.

4. Q: If engine failure occurs, what will happen?

A: Modern aircraft engines are very reliable, and complete engine failure is a rare occurrence. If the improbable does happen, you will not "fall out of the sky." Just do what the instructor had you practice during lessons—select a good landing area and land.

Student Pilot Flight Training

1. Q: What are the eligibility requirements for a student pilot?

A: The specific aeronautical experience requirements are outlined in 14CFR part 61. For the student pilot certificate requirements, refer to subpart C section 83.

2. Q: Where can I obtain my ground and flight school training?

A: Most airport operators can furnish this information, or you may contact the nearest FSDO.

3. Q: Is there a set number of flight instructional hours I will receive before I solo?

A: No. The instructor will not allow you to solo until you have learned to perform certain maneuvers. These maneuvers include safe takeoffs and landings. You must be able to maintain positive control of the aircraft at all times and to use good judgment.

4. Q: What should I know about Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations(14 CFR) prior to my first solo?
- A: *Your flight instructor will determine that you are familiar with appropriate portions of 14 CFR part 61, the general and visual flight rules of 14 CFR part 91, and will administer and grade a pre-solo written test prior to solo endorsement. The pre-solo written test will also include questions on the flight characteristics and operational limitations of the make and model aircraft to be flown.*
5. Q: What does an appropriate logbook endorsement for solo mean?
- A: *It means a verification by an authorized flight instructor showing that on the date specified, the student was given the required instruction and found competent to make solo flights.*
6. Q: When is the first solo endorsement required?
- A: *A student pilot must have a first solo endorsement dated within 90 days prior to any solo flight.*
7. Q: What is the difference between a recreational pilot certificate and a private pilot certificate?
- A: *The recreational pilot has fewer privileges than the private pilot. The holder of a recreational pilot certificate is allowed to fly an aircraft within 50 nautical miles from the airport where instruction was received and cannot operate in airspace where communications with air traffic control are required. Since qualification training in these areas is not required, a person should be able to obtain a recreational pilot certificate in fewer flight hours than required for a private pilot certificate. All privileges and limitations of the recreational pilot certificate are listed in 14 CFR part 61, section 101.*
8. Q: Where can I get information about the Sport Pilot Program?
- A: *Sport pilot enthusiasts may find information on the FAA's website at http://www.faa.gov/licenses_certificates/airmen_certification/sport_pilot/.*
9. Q: Does a student pilot automatically have the privilege of cross-country flying after soloing?
- A: *No. An instructor must have reviewed the pilot's preflight planning and preparation for solo cross-country flight and determine that the flight can be made safely under the known circumstances and conditions. The instructor must endorse the student pilot's logbook prior to each cross- country flight, stating the pilot is considered competent to make the flight. Under certain conditions, an instructor may authorize repeated solo flights over a given route.*
10. Q: As a student pilot, am I permitted to carry passengers prior to receipt of my recreational pilot certificate or private pilot certificate?
- A: *No.*

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This publication is intended to serve as a guide for prospective student pilots and for those already engaged in flight training. This guide presents, in how-to fashion, the general procedures for obtaining FAA Student Pilot, Sport Pilot, Recreational Pilot, and Private Pilot Certificates.

Before beginning flight training, it is important to have a basic understanding of the responsibilities, safety regulations, and other issues you will face, including the choice of a flight school, selecting study materials, study habits, and the role of the instructor (CFI), student, and the FAA. This handbook answers a student pilot's most frequently asked questions including:

- The role of the instructor
 - What flight training requires
 - CFI and student relationship
 - Medical requirements
 - Preparing for and taking the knowledge tests
 - Suggested study materials
- ...and more.

This book concludes with frequently asked questions on the subject of student pilot flight training, pilot requirements, and FAA tests. The *Student Pilot Guide* makes a great resource for students, flight schools and CFIs.

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