

Private Pilot License Requirements

To earn a private pilot certificate, a pilot must:

- Be 17 years of age
- Read, speak, write and understand the English language
- Hold a U.S. student pilot certificate, sport pilot certificate, or recreational pilot certificate
- Receive flight training and a logbook endorsement from an authorized instructor
- Meet the aeronautical experience requirements for the aircraft rating sought
- Pass a practical test for the aircraft rating sought

Reference [14 CFR §61.103](#) for a complete listing of all requirements.

Aeronautical Experience

According to federal regulations, you must meet the following aeronautical flight experience requirements to earn a private pilot license. At a minimum, private pilot candidates qualified for the practical test will have logged 40 hours of flight time that includes 20 hours of flight training from an authorized instructor as well as 10 hours of solo flight. The training must include:

- 3 hours of cross-country flight training
- 3 hours of night flight training consisting of:
 - One cross country flight over 100 nautical miles total distance
 - 10 takeoffs and 10 landings to a full stop with each landing involving a flight in the traffic pattern at an airport
- 3 hours of flight training on control and maneuvering solely by reference to instruments
- 3 hours of flight training with an authorized instructor in preparation for the practical test within the preceding 2 calendar months from the month of the test
- 10 hours of solo flight time consisting of:
 - 5 hours of solo cross-country time
 - One solo cross-country flight of 150 nautical miles total distance with full stop landings at three points and one segment of the flight consisting of a straight line distance of more than 50 nautical miles between takeoff and landing locations
 - Three takeoffs and three landings to a full stop (with each landing involving a flight in the traffic pattern) at an airport with an operating control tower

Private Pilot Flight Time Requirements

Total Flight Time	40 Hours
Cross-Country Flight Time	3 Hours
Night Flight Time	3 Hours
Instrument Training	3 Hours
Training with Authorized Instructor	3 Hours
Solo Flight Time	10 Hours

Reference [14 CFR §61.109](#) for more details on flight time requirements.

What's Involved to Take the Private Pilot Checkride (FAA Practical Test)?

Once you have completed your course requirements and been signed off by your flight instructor the exam is administered by a Designated Pilot Examiner (DPE) and consists of an oral and flight exam. The exam will consist of two parts. The first is the Oral exam and if you are successful, the DPE will administer the flight exam. Upon the successful completion of both, the examiner will fill out your FAA paperwork and you will receive a temporary private pilot certificate to use until you receive your official FAA certificate.

Private Pilot License Medical Requirements

In order to exercise the privileges of a private pilot license, you must hold a third-class medical certificate. Make sure you do this early in the training as you will not be able to solo an airplane without your medical certificate.