

FAA Requirements to Obtain a Private Pilot Certificate (Summary)

1. Be at least 17 years of age
2. Be able to read, write, and converse fluently in English
3. Obtain at least a third-class FAA medical certificate
4. Receive and log ground training from an authorized instructor or complete a home-study course
5. Pass a knowledge test with a score of 70% or better.
6. Accumulate appropriate flight experience
7. Receive a total of 40 hr. of flight instruction and solo flight time and demonstrate skill
8. Successfully complete a practical (flight) test given as a final exam by an FAA inspector or designated pilot examiner and conducted as specified in the FAA's Private Pilot Practical Test Standards

Private Pilot Privileges and Limitations

1. As a private pilot, you may not act as a pilot in command of an aircraft that is carrying passengers or property for compensation or hire, nor may you be paid to act as a pilot in command, except
 - a) You may act as a pilot in command, for compensation or hire, of an aircraft in connection with any business or employment if the flight is only incidental to that business or employment and the aircraft does not carry passengers or property for compensation or hire.
2. You may equally share the operating expenses of a flight with passengers, provided the expenses only involve fuel, oil, airport expenditures, or airplane rental fees.
3. If you are an aircraft salesperson and have at least 200 hr. of logged flight time, you may demonstrate an airplane in flight to a prospective buyer.
4. You may act as a pilot in command of a charitable, nonprofit, or community event flight described in [91.146](#), if the sponsor and pilot comply with the requirements of [91.146](#).
5. You may be reimbursed for aircraft operating expenses that are directly related to search and location operations, provided the expenses involve only fuel, oil, airport expenditures, or rental fees, and the operation is sanctioned and under the direction and control of a local, State, or Federal agency; or an organization that conducts search and location operations.

FAA Requirements to Obtain a Private Pilot Certificate (Detailed Version)

The Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs) identify the following requirements to obtain a Private Pilot Certificate:

1. Be at least 17 years of age
2. Be able to read, write, and converse fluently in English
3. Obtain at least a third-class FAA medical certificate
 - a. You must undergo a routine medical examination which may be administered only by an FAA-designated doctor called an Aviation Medical Examiner (AME)

- b. Even if you have a physical handicap, medical certificates can be issued in many cases. Operating limitation may be imposed depending on the nature of the disability.
 - c. Your FAA-Certificated Flight Instructor (CFI) or Fixed-Base Operator (FBO) will be able to recommend an AME. [NOTE: An FBO is an airport business that gives flight lessons, sells aviation fuel, repairs airplanes, etc.]
 - d. As a student pilot, your medical certificate also functions as your student pilot certificate once it is signed by you and your AME.
4. Receive and log ground training from an authorized instructor or complete either an online study course or home-study course to learn the following:
- a. Applicable Federal Aviation Regulations that relate to private pilot privileges, limitations, and flight operations
 - b. Accident reporting requirement of the National Transportation Safety Board
 - c. Use of applicable portions of the Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM) and FAA Advisory Circulars (ACs)
 - d. Use of aeronautical charts for navigation under Visual Flight Rules (VFR) using pilotage, dead reckoning, and navigation systems
 - e. Radio communication procedures
 - f. Recognition of critical weather situations from the ground and in flight and the procurement and use of aeronautical weather reports and forecasts
 - g. Safe and efficient operation of the aircraft
 - h. Effects of density altitude on aircraft takeoff and climb performance
 - i. Weight and balance computations
 - j. Principles of aerodynamics, aircraft engines and systems
 - k. Stall awareness and recovery techniques
 - l. Aeronautical decision making and judgment
 - m. Preflight actions including:
 - i. How to obtain information on runway lengths at airports of intended use, data on takeoff and landing distances, weather reports and forecasts, and fuel requirements
 - ii. How to plan for alternatives if the flight cannot be completed or delays are encountered
5. Pass a 60 multiple-choice question knowledge test, at an FAA-designated computer testing center, with a score of 70% or higher
6. Accumulate flight experience (FAR 61.109). Receive a minimum of 40 hours of flight instruction and solo flight time including:
- a. 20 hours of flight training from an authorized flight instructor, including at least
 - i. 3 hours of cross-country (i.e. to other airports)
 - ii. 3 hours of night, including
 - 1. One cross-country flight of over 100nm total distance
 - 2. 10 takeoffs and 10 landings to a full stop at an airport
 - iii. 3 hours of instrument flight training in an airplane

- iv. 3 hours in airplanes in preparation for the private pilot practical test within 60 days prior to that test
 - b. 10 hours of solo time in an airplane, including:
 - i. 5 hours of cross-country flights
 - ii. One solo cross-country flight of at least 150nm total distance, with full-stop landings at a minimum of three points and with one segment of the flight consisting of a straight-line distance of at least 50nm between takeoff and landing locations
 - iii. Three solo takeoffs and landings to a full stop at an airport with an operating control tower
- 7. Receive flight instruction and demonstrate skill (FAR 61.107)
 - a. Obtain a logbook sign-off by your CFI on the following areas of operation:
 - i. Preflight preparation
 - ii. Preflight procedures
 - iii. Airport operations
 - iv. Takeoffs, landings, and go-arounds
 - v. Performance maneuvers
 - vi. Ground reference maneuvers
 - vii. Navigation
 - viii. Slow flight and (aerodynamic) stalls
 - ix. Basic instrument maneuvers
 - x. Emergency operations
 - xi. Night operations
 - xii. Post-flight procedures
- 8. Successful complete a practical (flight) test given as a final exam by an FAA inspector or Designated Pilot Examiner (DPE); conducted as specified in the most current version of the FAA's Private Pilot Practical Test Standards (PTS).