

Training Corner

THE PRIVATE PILOT CERTIFICATE

The Fourteenth in a series of articles by:
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In my last article #13, I discussed *The Recreational Pilot Certificate*. It specifies what you must do to get ready for the FAA "check-ride." This flying test states what you should be able to do and how well you should do it.

The level of pilot certificate you are seeking determines the number and type of tasks and the level of proficiency of each task. A commercial pilot is eligible to charge for his/her services to the public and to make flying a fulltime career. A private pilot has all commercial privileges except he/she may not charge for services to the public. You may share costs, however. A private certificate is intended to be for one's self. A recreational pilot, on the other hand, normally flies for fun and usually part-time. It differs from the commercial and private by way of limited cross country flying; no night flying; and a limited number of passengers.

At this point I need to clarify several fine points of distinction. A private license and a commercial license are two different skill levels. However they do share a number of common knowledge subject areas such as weather, aeromedical factors, and airspace. The flying skill involves your ability to hold altitude, heading, and airspeed. For example, the recreational pilot must hold altitude ± 200 feet; the private pilot ± 100 feet; and the commercial pilot ± 50 feet.

A private pilot airplane and a private pilot gyroplane, being the same skill level, also share many of the same common subject areas, such as weather, aeromedical factors, and airspace. Where they differ is, that for airplane, you need to know airplane aerodynamics and for gyroplane you need to know gyro-

plane aerodynamics. Therefore, the license is at the private level of common subjects and specialized for the category and class you are applying for; e.g., private pilot airplane or private pilot gyroplane.

Often, pilots I train already hold a license, say, commercial airplane. They can add a gyro rating to their existing certificate at the recreational, private, or commercial level. That is their license may read commercial airplane and private gyro. I'll tell you more about add-on ratings in subsequent articles.

To meet the requirements as a Private Pilot in FAR Part 61-Certification; Subpart E -Private Pilots; you must, under § 61.103;

- [a] Be at least 17 years of age
- [c] Be fluent in English
- [d] Receive an instructor's logbook endorsement on aeronautical knowledge
- [e] Pass a FAA written knowledge test § 61.105[b]
- [f] Receive and log authorized flight-training § 61.107[b][3]
- [g] Meet the aeronautical experience required in § 61.109[d]
- [h] Pass the required practical test [PTS]
- [i] Comply with the sections of this part for category and class [Subpart E]

I apologize for giving you FAR references in the above requirement list. The sections contain a laundry list of topics and procedures that you can look up according to your interest. My intent is to provide an outline of what you must do and where to find the correct information, depending on your interest.

In Article #12, *The Practical Test Standards*, I outlined the PTS for the Recreational Pilot. It consisted of 6 Areas of Operations totaling 35 tasks. They are repeated again

for your convenience so that you will be able to make some easy comparisons.

- I. Preflight Preparation-With tasks A-J [10]
- II. Airport And Traffic Pattern Operation-With tasks A-L [12]
- III. Flight Maneuvering By Ground Reference-with tasks A-C [3]
- IV. Maneuvering at Critically Slow Airspeed-with tasks A-B [2]
- V. Navigation-with tasks A-C [3]
- VI. Emergency Operations-with tasks A-E [5]

The Private Pilot PTS consists of 11 areas of operation consisting of 42 tasks. They are as follows:

- I. Preflight Preparation-with tasks A-H [8]
- II. Preflight Procedures-with tasks A-E [5]
- III. Airport Operations-with tasks A-C [3]
- IV. Takeoffs, Landings, And Go-Arounds-with tasks A-G [7]
- V. Performance Maneuver-1 task [1]
- VI. Ground Reference Maneuvers-with tasks A-C [3]
- VII. Navigation-with tasks A-D [4]
- VIII. Flight at Slow Airspeed-with tasks A-B [2]
- IX. Emergency Operations-with tasks A-E [5]
- X. Light Operations-with tasks A-B [2]
- XI. Post-Flight Procedures-with tasks A-B [2]

Your flight training is directed toward accomplishing the above 42 tasks. I'm not going to detail each task, but you need to know what they are. I will, however, point out some differences between the Recreational Tasks and the Private Tasks.

Notice that in the operational area of navigation, the Private PTS has one more task. It is radio navigation and radar services. Since the

Recreational Rating is limited to 50 NM, radio navigation for cross-country flying is not required.

Also, notice that the Private PTS has the area of operation X. NIGHT OPERATIONS. Since the Recreational Certificate is limited to daytime VFR [visual flight rules] only, it need not contain any tasks pertaining to night flying. If you want lights on your gyro to fly at night, you must have at least a private pilot gyroplane rating.

Each student should have copy of their appropriate PTS by the time they are ready to solo. By using the PRACTICAL TEST CHECKLIST in the PTS, you can chart your progress of what you

have accomplished and what training remains to be done.

In my next article I'll discuss the Commercial Pilot Certificate, and the differences in the Commercial and Private PTSs. In future articles, I'll also tell you about add-on ratings to an existing pilot certificate. As you upgrade your license, you can get credit for some of the PTS tasks you have already passed.

If you do not have a Practical Test Standard [PTS] for the level of rating you are interested in, they are a free download from the FAA's Web site. Go to: <http://afs600.faa.gov>, click Search, scroll down to Practical Test Standards, and click Search again. Downloads are in Adobe

Acrobat .pdf format, so everyone should be able to receive them.

CAUTION: Be patient and master each stage of flying and knowledge before venturing on. The longer you are in aviation the more you find out you are never as good or as smart as you think you are.

Remember, "the air, even more so than the sea, is most unforgiving for the slightest mistake." Get qualified flight instruction before getting into a gyro. Skillful pilots make it look easy, but it takes time to learn. Do not get into a hurry and take chances.

GYROPLANE FLYING FOR BEGINNERS
A Guide to Getting Your Gyroplane License
 By Patrick Howell
 Highly recommended by Don Farrington
 and Wing Commander Ken Wallis.
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