

## Sport Pilot Licence - The Quickest Way to Flying

Ever look up at the sky on a beautiful day and wish that you could fly around like a bird? Why not become a certified Sport Pilot then! It's the Federal Aviation Administration's newest certified pilot category, and it is much quicker and less expensive than becoming a certified Private Pilot. There are even many different types of aircraft that you can fly to allow you to get you more of the feeling of actually "flying" like the birds.

The Sport Pilot certification came into effect September 1, 2004. Sport Pilots can be trained and qualified to fly in Light Sport Aircraft (LSA) such as airplanes, weight-shift aircraft, powered parachutes, gliders, and lighter-than-air (airships or balloons). The Experimental Aircraft Association also believes that gyroplanes will soon be included in the LSA category, making a total of six different types of aircraft the sport pilot could command.

The minimum qualifications for becoming a sport pilot are that the applicant be 16 years of age to start training (or 14 years for gliders), and at least 17 years old to be eligible to take the licensing test (16 for gliders). The sport pilot applicant does not have to make an appointment with a FAA Designated Medical Examiner to get a flight physical, because he / she is considered medically qualified with just a valid drivers license. (That is, of course, if the candidate has not been previously denied, or had an FAA medical certificate revoked.) If the aspiring sport pilot already has an FAA medical, that's fine too! And finally, he / she must be able to read, write, and understand American English.

Whereas becoming a Private Pilot means you have to log at least 40 hours of flight time, but the national average right now is almost 65 hours. Of those hours, 20 must be with an instructor (OUCH! - those instructor fees), and at least 10 hours must be solo. As a Sport Pilot candidate, you can be eligible to take your certification test with as little as 20 hours of flight time! You must take and pass a written test for both qualifications, but with the sport pilot route, you'll be up in the air much faster and heavier in the wallet area. The best part is, all the time you log as a sport pilot can be applied towards your private pilot license should you decide to upgrade later. Talk about a great starting place!

Some of the restrictions sport pilots have placed on them are

- 1) no flights above 10,000 feet,
- 2) no flights into airspaces around airports which are controlled by towers,
- 3) no flights outside the U.S.,
- 4) no night flights, and
- 5) no flights unless the surface of the Earth can be seen for flight reference (i.e. cloudy days).

Also, sport pilots can only take one other person flying at a time, so taking ALL your friends flying could take an extra long day! Also, taking people flying for compensation or hire is not allowed under the new sport pilot rating, however

With Certificated Flight Instructors (CFI's) all around the U.S. gearing up to teach this new rating, the Sport Pilot certificate would seem to be the best value for your hard earned dollar.[www.faa.gov](http://www.faa.gov) World Aviation Portal Aviation Ads Aviation Business Directory Aviation Links Index