

AOPA/EAA Medical Exemption Request Information Guide

Currently, FAR 61.23 requires that all pilots must hold at least a third class medical certificate to exercise the privileges of a private or recreational certificate. **AOPA and EAA are asking the FAA for an exemption to that rule.**

- **EDUCATION** - The exemption, if granted, would give pilots who fly recreationally the option of getting a third class medical or, instead, participating in a recurrent online education program that will teach them how to self-assess their fitness to fly. The education program required to participate in the exemption would teach pilots how to conduct a thorough self-assessment, how to identify warning signs of pending serious medical conditions, show risk factor mitigation of common significant medical conditions, and demonstrate appropriate use of medications, such as understanding the effects of altitude on medication side effects. It would expand understanding of aeromedical factors and basic physiology.
- **SELF-ASSESSMENT** – Pilots will be required to conduct a meaningful self-assessment of health prior to flight similar to what they do now between AME visits – the difference is they will have a higher level of knowledge to do the self-assessment after completion of the required education program.
- **FLYING RECREATIONALLY** - The exemption would be allowed for use in certain sized aircraft and particular types of operations: for example, a single-engine aircraft with 180 horsepower or less, four seats or fewer, and fixed gear, with operations limited to day VFR flight with one passenger, and not be for hire or fly in furtherance of a business. Through this exemption, if issued as requested, any pilot holding a student, recreational, private, commercial, or ATP certificate would have the option of operating under this exemption when flying recreationally.
- **BASELINE OF HEALTH** - A valid driver's license that will provide proof of a basic level of health, just as it does for pilots with a sport pilot certificate. Additionally, a state driver's license may be revoked or suspended for certain offenses that also may impact the license holder's ability and fitness to fly an aircraft (including, among others, substance abuse, excessive speeding, careless and reckless operation of a vehicle, numerous traffic violations).
- **FAR 61.53** - All pilots are already required to conduct a self-assessment of health to meet the requirement of FAR 61.53—which states that pilots must not fly with a known medical deficiency or using medicines that might affect their ability to fly. The education program required to participate in the exemption would teach pilots how to conduct a thorough self-assessment.

Public Interest

General aviation is an integral and vital part of the global transportation system, providing services and fulfilling needs that are essential to the nation's economy and a community's needs. Maintaining the overall strength and activity of general aviation is in the public's best interest.

Maintains or Enhances Safety

Granting this petition would provide an equivalent level of safety and, in practice, stands to provide a greater level of safety. This petition for exemption requires initial and recurrent education on aeromedical factors exceeding those presently mandated by the FAA and requires an operating limitation linked to state-issued driver's license standards and a self-assessment standard. It also helps to mitigate the increased risk that may occur naturally when pilots transition into unfamiliar and sometimes distinctly different aircraft in order to avoid FAA medical testing requirements. This petition gives those pilots an alternative that may allow them to continue to fly and to do so in aircraft in which they have familiarity and experience.

Equivalent level of safety is demonstrated in history - Statistical evidence supports our request

- An equivalent level of safety regarding aeromedical factors exists between those operations that currently require a medical certificate and those operations that do not currently require a medical certificate. There is an extremely low incidence of medically related accidents across both factions, supporting the conclusion that a medical certificate may not always be required in order to maintain a lower incidence of medically related aviation accidents.
- Seven years of statistical evidence to support the petition - An ASI study of light sport aircraft accidents from 2004 – 2011 has shown that there have been **NO** accidents attributable to pilot medical deficiency.

Reduces Unnecessary Burdens and Barriers

This petition for exemption would reduce the unduly burdensome and needless barriers for this population of pilots who may safely operate a greater number of available aircraft.

- More than 70 percent of AOPA and EAA members have expressed a strong interest in changing the third class medical requirement for pilots flying recreationally.
- If granted, the exemption would allow the use of close to 100,000 aircraft – aircraft most familiar and available to pilots.
- Our petition offers substantial economic savings to pilots and the U.S. government. A conservative estimate shows a savings of more than \$241 million for pilots and \$11 million to the federal government over 10 years.

Members and Non-Members Can Help

Anyone interested in supporting our initiative can sign up to receive updates online. Anyone who has submitted their email address will receive an email notification when the exemption is open for comments online and a template for writing and submitting valuable comments in support of the effort. The window for comments will likely only be open for approximately 60 days.