



Why?

Your friends may have learned about general aviation only through accident reports in the local newspaper. As a result, they may have a negative impression of those "little planes" because they have no access to positive, accurate information. Think back. How did you learn about general aviation? Chances are it was through a friendly pilot who sensed your interest.

AOPA's Fly-A-Controller, Fly-A-Reporter, and Fly-A-Leader programs have paid off in enhancing understanding and appreciation of general aviation. Due to efforts of AOPA members like you, hundreds of controllers and reporters have taken "Familiarization Flights" which have improved communication between pilots and controllers, and created positive news coverage of general aviation. The same can be done for the general public, starting with the friends of AOPA's 370,000 members.

When?

Any time. You know people who have expressed interest in flying with you. Now is the best time to do it! Take friends for short pleasure hops, or invite them along on a quick business trip. To create the best impression, make sure the weather is clear and as smooth as possible. A turbulent IFR flight will make an impression, but not the right one.

Where?

A scenic flight including landmarks your friend may want to photograph (from a reasonable altitude!) is a sure hit. Ask if there are any special requests. Most people enjoy seeing their home from the air, but you can also give them a smooth night flight over city lights.

Tips For Flying Friends

Make sure the airplane is clean, inside and out. A dirty airplane makes a bad first impression.

Explain VFR and IFR flight. Point out the differences between them, including flight plans. The public often thinks of a VFR flight as "out of control," or permitted only after a special request to the FAA. Emphasize that ALL flights, both VFR and IFR, are governed by federal regulations, and that both pilot and plane must be properly certified. Tell them about your Flight Review and the plane's annual inspection.

Provide an extra copy of the chart you will use.

Leave the aerobatics and stall demonstrations for another day. Most first-time passengers want the flight to be as uneventful as possible. Remember, the flight is intended to demonstrate the joy of flight and the utility of the aircraft.

Point out safety features and briefly describe how the avionics help you navigate precisely. Chances are your friend had no idea such sophisticated equipment is found on smaller aircraft.

Describe airport and traffic pattern procedures. Let your friend help scan for other aircraft and participate in flight duties as you see fit.

Make it clear the flight can and should be cut short if your friend starts to feel uncomfortable.

Give your friend some AOPA information on general aviation, such as the AOPA's Fact Card or a recent issue of *AOPA Pilot*.

Ask AOPA for a First Flight Certificate for presentation at the end of the flight. It will serve as an attractive souvenir.

Facts For Your Friends

In a typical light single, such as a fixed-gear Cessna or Piper, mechanical engine failures occur only once every two million flight hours. The typical general aviation aircraft operates 150 flight hours per year.

General aviation aircraft represent 96 percent of the civil fleet, or almost 206,000 aircraft. There are more general aviation business jets than there are jet airliners operated by US major air carriers.

For every airport served by major airlines, general aviation serves 45. General aviation serves all 19,500 landing sites in the United States, while scheduled airlines serve less than 400.

In a recent year, general aviation aircraft flew almost four billion miles, spent 30 million hours in the air and made 48 million departures. Air carriers, by contrast, flew five billion miles, spent 17 million hours in the air and made only 10 million departures. Half of all airline flights originate at only 21 hub airports.

General aviation provides services beyond pleasure and business flying. These include: emergency rescue; transport of blood, organs and patients; law enforcement; crop dusting; news and traffic reporting; overnight package and cargo delivery; wildlife surveys, and pipeline patrol.

Have fun and fly safely!

AOPA has other outreach programs, including: Fly A Teacher, Fly A Leader, Fly A Friend, and How to Have a Successful Media Event.

For more information write:
AOPA Communications Division, Dept. FC,
421 Aviation Way, Frederick, MD 21701-4798
Or call us at 1-800-USA-AOPA

