

AOPA's Member Guide to Being

SPORT PILOT READY



AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION

If you have a driver's license and are in good health, you can be a sport pilot.

That's the heart of the new Sport Pilot and Light Sport Aircraft rules that take effect September 1. So, if you hold at least a recreational pilot certificate and a valid driver's license, sport pilot may get you back in the air.



Sport Pilot Ready

From the beginning of this initiative AOPA pressed regulators to allow its members to use a driver's license in lieu of an FAA medical certificate—and in most cases, now you can! Here's what you need to know to get started flying:

- You must hold a recreational pilot certificate or better.
- You must have a current and valid state-issued driver's license.
- You may fly any certified or experimental aircraft that meets the definition of a light sport aircraft.
- You'll need a flight review, relevant endorsements and ratings, and you may need model-specific training.
- You can fly with a current or expired special issuance medical that has not been withdrawn by the FAA.
- You can't have a medical condition that makes you an unsafe pilot.
- Your most recent medical certificate can't have been suspended, revoked, denied, or withdrawn by the FAA.

What Sport Pilot Allows You To Do

If you want to experience the joy of basic stick-and-rudder flying, then sport pilot is for you. When acting as a sport pilot, you may fly in day VFR conditions in uncongested airspace. You can even share the experience with a passenger.



Airplanes You Can Fly

It's time to go flying with some old friends or make some new ones. There are currently more than 21,000 certified airplanes from seven manufacturers that qualify as light sport aircraft. Certified airplanes you can fly include:

- Piper J-2 and J-3 Cubs
- Aeronca Champ
- Luscombe 8, 8A, 8B, and 8C
- Taylorcraft BC, BCS, and BC-65
- Ercoupe 415C and 415 CD

A wide range of kit-built aircraft also qualify. What makes a light sport aircraft? The criteria include:

- Max. takeoff weight of 1,320 pounds
- Max. speed of 120 knots
- One or two seats
- One reciprocating engine
- Fixed gear

For other criteria, a complete list of light sport aircraft, and a spotter's guide, visit AOPA Online (www.aopa.org/sportpilot).

Get Ready, Stay Sharp

Your AOPA membership gives you access to a wide range of tools and information that will prepare you to get back in the air and keep your sport pilot flying sharp.

- Visit AOPA Online. We've gathered all the information you need in one place (www.aopa.org/sportpilot).
- Review AOPA's *Guide to Getting Back Into Flying* to find out what's changed since the last time you flew (www.aopa.org/members/files/guides/getback.html).
- Read *AOPA Pilot* each month for technique, safety, and proficiency articles.

- Get insured. The AOPA Insurance Agency, the world's largest aviation insurance agency, is ready today to get you properly insured. Call 800/622-2672 or apply and purchase online (www.aopaia.com).
- Take AOPA Air Safety Foundation online courses (www.aopa.org/asf/courses.html). They provide refresher training on everything from runway signs to preflight briefings.
- Protect yourself. The AOPA Legal Services Plan provides unlimited consultation on many aviation matters covered by the plan. For only \$26 a year, you are protected when you need it. For more information, call 800/USA-AOPA (872-2672).



The FAA Explanation

Need more details? Here are the FAA's own frequently asked questions and answers. These FAQs and other information on sport pilot are available on the FAA's Web site (www.faa.gov/avr/afs/sportpilot/faq.doc).

Q. Why does the FAA specify conditions for using a current and valid U.S. driver's license only for persons whose most recent application for an airman medical certificate has been denied; whose most recently held airman medical certificate was rescinded or revoked; or whose most recent special issuance has been withdrawn?

A. To clarify that, if your most recent records on file with the FAA indicate that you were found ineligible to exercise airman privileges for medical reasons then, in the interest of public safety, you shouldn't go out right away and use your driver's license as medical qualification.

We understand that these conditions may not have been expected and may disappoint some people. That was not our intent, nor is it our intent that affected persons would have to maintain an airman medical certificate if they would rather use their current and valid U.S. driver's license to

medically qualify as a sport pilot.

We ultimately concluded that, in those cases where the FAA has existing knowledge of medical ineligibility, we need the affected person to address it and hopefully have it resolved. To meet the intent of the rule, the affected person should apply for reconsideration of their eligibility. In some denial cases, applicants simply may not have provided enough information to the FAA or may not have supplied information that the FAA may have requested. In certain other denial cases, applicants may not have exercised their appeal rights which may have led to certification in some cases.



The FAA wants to see as many pilots as possible take advantage of this exciting new rule and looks forward to working with individuals seeking to exercise sport pilot privileges. We also intend to work with EAA, AOPA, and other industry groups toward that end.

Q. What if I meet the requirements set forth in the rule that allow me to medically qualify using my current and valid U.S. driver's license? When may I use my current and valid U.S. driver's license as medical qualification?

A. Provided you meet the requirements and you are qualified to exercise sport pilot privileges using a current and valid U.S. driver's license, you may do so on September 1, 2004, the effective date of the rule.

Q. What if I already hold a pilot certificate and a valid airman medical certificate? Do I have to maintain my airman medical certificate if I will only be exercising sport pilot privileges or may I use my current and valid U.S. driver's license as medical qualification?

A. You may use your current and valid U.S. driver's license to exercise sport pilot privileges; however, you must hold the required, valid FAA airman medical certificate if you wish to exercise private pilot (or higher) privileges.

Q. What if I hold a special issuance? Is that considered denial of an application for an airman medical certificate?

A. No. Special issuance is not considered the denial of an FAA airman medical certificate.



Q. What if I know (or suspect) that I have a significant medical condition and I hold (and have been able to maintain) a current and valid U.S. driver's license? Am I authorized to exercise sport pilot privileges provided I otherwise qualify?

A. Long-standing FAA regulation, § 61.53, prohibits all pilots—those who are required to hold airman medical certificates and those who are not—from exercising privileges during periods of medical deficiency. The FAA revised § 61.53 to include under this prohibition sport pilots who use a current and valid U.S. driver's license as medical qualification. The prohibition is also added under §§ 61.23 (c) (2) (iv) and 61.303 (b) (2) (4) for sport pilot operations.

You should consult your private physician to determine whether you have a medical deficiency that would interfere with the safe performance of sport piloting duties. Certain medical information that may be helpful for pilots is posted on the FAA Web site at (www.cami.jccbi.gov/aam-400A/400brochure.html).

Q. What if I have a life-long, chronic medical condition (e.g., diabetes mellitus) and I have never applied for or held an FAA airman medical certificate and my medical condition has never precluded me from being able to renew my U.S. driver's license? Am I authorized to exercise sport pilot privileges provided I otherwise qualify?

A. You should consult your private physician to determine whether you have a medical deficiency that would interfere with the safe performance of sport piloting duties. You may exercise sport pilot privileges provided you are in good health, your medical condition is under control, you adhere to

your physician's recommended treatment, and you feel satisfied that you are able to conduct safe flight operations.

Q. What if I resubmit my application and, ultimately, I am certified? Must I continue to renew my medical or may I use my current and valid U.S. driver's license as evidence of medical qualification?

A. If you are ultimately certified then you are no longer on record with the FAA as having had your most recent application denied or your most recently held FAA airman medical certificate suspended or revoked, etc. Therefore, it is not necessary to maintain airman medical certification thereafter to exercise sport pilot privileges provided you hold a current and valid U.S. driver's license and provided you otherwise qualify.

Q. Approximately how many applicants for third-class airman medical certificates are denied?

A. Over the past three years, the number of denials of third-class airman medical certificates has ranged from approximately 2,000 to 2,500 per year based on approximately 135,000 to 140,000 applications for third-class airman medical certification per year. Most of these denials resulted because of a failure of the applicants to provide sufficient information for the FAA to make a favorable decision.

Got Questions?

Get answers. Call AOPA's Pilot Information Center 800/USA-AOPA (872-2672) to talk for free with one of AOPA's staff technical experts. They're sport pilot ready and anxious to help you get back in the air.



What You Need To Know

- If you hold at least a recreational pilot certificate, a valid state-issued driver's license, and your medical hasn't been suspended, revoked, denied, or withdrawn by the FAA, you can fly!
- Thousands of certified and kit-built aircraft weighing less than 1,320 pounds with a top airspeed of 120 knots qualify under the new rules.
- AOPA is Sport Pilot Ready with answers to your questions. Call our Pilot Information Center at 800/USA-AOPA (872-2672), Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern or visit AOPA Online (www.aopa.org/sportpilot) to learn more.

AOPA Membership—Still Just \$39

The benefits have never been better. Join more than 400,000 of your fellow pilots and become an AOPA member today. Your membership gives you an incredible range of tools and the resources of the world's largest, most effective aviation association. Take full advantage of the new sport pilot rules and join or renew today. To join see AOPA Online (www.aopa.org) or call 800/USA-AOPA.

AOPA.
We're Sport Pilot Ready.



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