

## Chapter 1 - Introduction to Flying

The FAA Pilot's Handbook of Aeronautical Knowledge 8083-25B (PHAK) Chapter 1 starts out with the FAA view of the History of Flight and the History of the FAA. The role of the FAA along with its documents is applicable and the aircraft types and pilot certificates. Here we will provide better detail for the important topics covered that need better explanations for you as a sport or private pilot applicant flying Light Sport Aircraft (LSA).

### Differences in Sport and Private Pilot Certificates

In the Pilot Certificates section page 1-16, the differences and advantages/disadvantages of sport versus private are not covered very well in the PHAK so this important subject will be covered here in detail.

You may find yourself in one of these situations...

- You want to start as a sport pilot first and move on to your private pilot later, or
- You are a Private Pilot and want to be a Sport Pilot, or
- You are a Sport Pilot applicant (or a Sport Pilot student in training) who wants to just go for private pilot and bypass the Sport Pilot certificate all together, or
- You have a Sport Pilot certificate and you want to transition from a Sport Pilot to a Private Pilot certificate, or
- You a Private Pilot student and want to utilize your Private Pilot training to obtain a Sport Pilot certificate.

Don't worry...we've got the answers to many of the frequently asked questions about Private Pilot sport plane training.

### Differences between sport pilot and private pilot overview

Sport Pilots are limited to flying light sport aircraft, no night flying, and no flying above 10,000 feet MSL or 2000 feet AGL whichever is higher and NOTHING for compensation or hire.

Private pilots may fly for business related activities as long as the flight is "only incidental to the business" and the aircraft does not carry passengers for compensation or hire. This opens the door for using an aircraft for business related activities. Additionally, as a private pilot you can demonstrate an aircraft to a buyer as an aircraft

salesman. This is required to do sales demos at airshows. Sport pilots cannot do demo rides to sell aircraft.

Private pilots may also fly "on top" of clouds with no visual reference to the surface. This is handy to go over a valley that is fogged in or over the top of clouds rather than underneath them. Additionally, private pilots can fly in Class G airspace (airspace close to the ground) with only 1 mile of visibility instead of 3 for a sport pilot.

Training and requirements for the sport pilot certificate do not include flight at towered airports, but sport pilots can fly into control towered airports with additional training and endorsements same as a private pilot.

The pilot "stick and rudder flying skills" are the same. There is no difference in the piloting ability (stick and rudder skills) between a sport pilot and private pilot. The flying standards are the same.

However, sport pilots are not required to have training in a number of areas which reduces the minimum required training time by half. This is an overview from the knowledge test questions and the PTS (practical test standards) or Checkride standards of the additional subjects the private pilot must be trained and tested:

- Night flight with night cross country training
- Instrument flight training (except for some required before a cross country flight in a LSA above Vh 87 knots)
- Radio navigation (VOR, DME, etc. which many do not use any more with GPS)
- Communications and operations at tower controlled airports (however, sport pilots can obtain this training and privileges, but this is in addition to the minimum sport pilot requirements)

### Private pilot wanting to become a sport pilot

A Private Pilot using a drivers license as medical eligibility operates as a Sport Pilot. You must operate using the Sport Pilot privileges and limitations per 61.315, fly a Light-Sport Aircraft (LSA) and must have a flight review (in a LSA) similar to private pilots. Private Pilots operating as Sport Pilots can operate in tower controlled airspace without the additional "airspace endorsement" required by sport pilots. The Private Pilot certificate demonstrates the knowledge and skill to operate within tower controlled airspace per 61.303 (A) 2 ii.

## Can sport pilot training be used for private pilot training?

To clarify the question – Yes and No. Here are the details you need to know which depends on the flight instructor rating and pilot certificate.

First off, solo time is solo time. Yes, all solo time for sport pilot can be used towards the private pilot certificate solo time.

Dual training is where it gets tricky. To understand the differences in Sport and Private pilot training the differences in flight instructors must be understood. A normal private pilot CFI (subpart H) can train Sport and Private pilots and can teach in both LSA and non LSA. A flight instructor with a Sport rating CFIS (subpart K) can only teach sport pilots and only teach in Light-Sport Aircraft...

So yes, if the flight instructor is qualified and current as a private pilot flight instructor (CFI), then all the dual training time in any aircraft/airplane counts towards the sport and the private pilot certificate. If you start training, or even get your sport pilot license first, all your dual training counts towards the private pilot certificate also with a CFI.

If the flight instructor has a FAA Flight Instructor with a Sport Rating (CFIS), the dual training DOES count towards the dual training for the private pilot certificate if the pilot gets a sport pilot certificate per 61.109 (L) first.

Typically, to go from a sport to a private pilot would take an additional 20 hours any way for the extra night, instrument, VOR navigation and towered airports dual training.

Here is a unique situation where a subpart H (private) certified flight instructor (CFI) has a current flight instructor certificate but let his FAA 3<sup>rd</sup> class medical expire. He/she can instruct a student private pilot in a light sport aircraft without a medical and the time counts towards a sport pilot and private pilot because he/she is pilot in command (PIC). All hours count towards a sport and private certificate (except night) because the CFI has a valid Subpart H flight instructor certificate and is PIC of the LSA. He/she cannot fly or provide instruction in a non LSA, at night in any aircraft or in IFR conditions in any aircraft because he cannot be pilot in command.

The CFI with an expired medical and a CFIS can give instrument training in a LSA required by 61.93 (e)(12) before a student cross country if the aircraft has the required equipment, AND as long as they are in day VMC. No attitude display is required for this and a partial panel (compass, airspeed, altitude) is adequate.

## Sport pilot Too private pilot transition overview

Many pilots want to obtain their Sport Pilot certificate first and may or may not want to go on to private pilot because one or more of these typical/common reasons:

- They do not want to hassle with the FAA medical examination or risk not passing it, essentially ending their flying dream.
- They want to get their FAA pilot certificate in half the time and half the cost.
- They have no need nor desire for flying at night or above 10,000 feet.
- Their aircraft is not equipped with IFR instruments or they do not intend on flying by instruments.
- They plan on using a GPS rather than old and more difficult VOR/DME radio navigation systems
- They do not want to fly into busy airports and/or want the stress/learning required to talk with a control tower.

To upgrade from a sport to a private pilot, the sport pilot (Airplane) is trained by a qualified private pilot CFI following additional lesson plans (night flying, flying into towered airports, instrument training and VOR old radio navigation), take the private pilot knowledge test, and take a checkride with an FAA Private Pilot Examiner (DPE).

The pilot safety and skill are the same for sport and private.

Generally, there is not much additional cost to becoming a sport pilot first except the sport pilot knowledge test and the sport pilot checkride, both which are stepping stones to building knowledge and experience to private pilot knowledge, skill and requirements.

## Additional sport to private pilot lesson plans

If a sport pilot wants to continue on and get a private pilot license, the following additional areas must be accomplished.

- Tower Controlled Airspace (this is not required if student or sport pilot has the airspace endorsement)
- Instrument Training
- Radio Navigation
- Night Flight with Night Cross Country Training
- Private Pilot Knowledge Test Preparation
- Private Pilot Checkride Preparation

It must be understood that if any pilot is transitioning from a sport pilot certificate to a private pilot certificate that all homework, ground school and flight proficiency from the Sport Pilot Training Syllabus must be accomplished prior to these lesson plans because it is a prerequisite to the private pilot additional materials presented here.

If you are interested in more details as to WHY and more specific training materials for sport to private or private pilot go to:

<http://www.pilot-stores.com/kits-private-pilot/>

## Selecting a Flight School

Under the "Selecting a Flight School" Page 1-18 The Pilot's Handbook of Aeronautical Knowledge talks about the 14 CFR Part 141 flight school which is NOT applicable to sport pilots. The Part 141 is an approved curriculum with an organized training syllabus similar to the "Hamilton Pilot Training System".

Overall, if you are looking for a flight school the more research you do the better off you will be. Not all flight schools are the same and they vary greatly. Again, this was not covered very well in the FAA Pilots Handbook of Aeronautical Knowledge so we will cover it in greater detail here.

Choosing a school and flight instructor can be a daunting task. But this is a very important task to assure you are selecting a path that is best for you. Take several introductory or discovery flights to evaluate aircraft and potential instructors. The FAA suggests (in the FAA Pilot's Handbook of Aeronautical Knowledge) you do all this research and develop questions. Well that is a great

concept but knowing what to ask in the first place is a great challenge. We have developed some questions that are applicable. So before you go up for that first exciting flight in any aircraft, ask the questions listed here. Asking these questions will show the flight instructor that you have done your homework. Any good instructor will be happy to answer these questions.

### Questions To Ask the Potential Instructor:

*Are you a FAA Certified Flight Instructor (CFI) and can I see your certificate?*

So, the appropriate answer is, "I am a FAA Certified Flight Instructor (CFI) and here is my certificate", look at the green plastic card/certificate with the expiration date.

*Do you have a training program specifically for sport pilots?*

The appropriate answer is "Yes." If the CFI is un-enthusiastic or un-informed about Sport Pilot, you'll know right away. If the CFI tries to talk you out of becoming a sport pilot, this is not a good start either. Some reasons the CFI may resist instructing you for a Sport Pilot license:

- The CFI may suggest you go for a Private Pilot license rather than a Sport Pilot license because they are un-familiar with the Sport Pilot license process. This is very common.
- The CFI feels they will make more money if you go for the Private Pilot license rather than a Sport Pilot license.
- The CFI doesn't have a Light-Sport Aircraft (LSA) to instruct in.

*Can I see your training program?*

The appropriate answer is "Yes." FAA certified flight instructors (CFI's) are required to have a training syllabus for an efficient and effective system. It is surprising how many instructors do not have a training syllabus.

Most good instructors will be happy to show you their training program and explain how you will proceed from first flights to FAA certified Pilot. You should be able to get a copy of the instructor's training syllabus.

*Do you have an Light Sport Aircraft (LSA) available for training?*

The appropriate answer is “Yes.” Even though a Sport Pilot can receive training in a standard category aircraft (heavier and not a qualified LSA), it would be best for you to learn to fly in a LSA. You’ll get experience in the aircraft you’ll take your checkride in and also fly as a Sport Pilot.

*Can you provide references from some of your previous students?*

The appropriate answer is “Yes.” Good instructors will be happy to provide references. Students are proud to be used as a reference and you will learn quite a bit during your conversation.

*How much experience do you have training Sport Pilot students?*

Although the Sport Pilot program is relatively new, the CFI should have some experience training sport pilots. Schools that have historically trained Private Pilots and beginning Sport Pilot training are fine, as long as all of the other questions in this questionnaire are answered suitably.

*Do you use “Scenario Based Training” in your training program?*

The appropriate answer is “Yes.” The FAA and insurance companies have found that a significant number of accidents happen after a pilot receives their pilot certificate and is out on their own in real world hazards. Some typical hazards are:

- Pilot mental/physical condition.
- Aircraft condition or maintenance issues and situations.
- Pilot in command challenging real world situations such as weather, passenger, airport, etc,
- External pressures such as arrival deadlines, racing the bad weather conditions, rental time constraints, etc.

Scenario Based Training (SBT) addresses these potential hazards and how to deal with them utilizing Aeronautical Decision Making (ADM), risk management, and situational awareness to minimize the risks by determine the best course of action for a given set of circumstances. Schools are adopting SBT to develop well-rounded pilots. In some instances, insurance companies are requiring schools to show that they have

incorporated SBT safety practices into their program.

*What aircraft will I solo in?*

If your instructor will not allow you to solo in the Light Sport Aircraft you’re receiving training in, what aircraft will you solo in?

Often, once you are signed off for solo, you can purchase your own aircraft, and can solo in it. Otherwise, you will need to make arrangements for an aircraft that meets the requirements to solo for Sport Pilot.

*Is required and preventative maintenance performed on the Light Sport Aircraft? Can I see the maintenance records?*

A safe airplane LSA is one that is properly maintained. This involves routine inspection and replacement of worn components. Maintenance logbooks must be available to any qualified pilot who wants to fly the aircraft. A good pilot, instructor, or aircraft mechanic should know where the logbooks are and be proud to show you the basic annual and 100 hours condition inspections. Additionally, routine maintenance is of little value if the pilot/CFI/mechanic cannot remember when he or she last changed the spark plugs or replaced the fuel lines! Maintenance records help to ensure that proper maintenance has been performed in a timely manner.

**How do you evaluate the instructor’s responses to the questions?**

Was the CFI patient and happy to answer the questions? Did he provide good answers? How the CFI answers these questions can clue you in to how you and the CFI will get along. If the answers are informative and the instructor exhibits the patience to answer them to your satisfaction, take an Intro/Demo flight to learn more. Otherwise, look elsewhere for another instructor/school.

**Questions you should ask yourself after the first introductory flight:**

*Did I have fun?*

You should have fun on your first flight with your instructor. If you did not, find someone else. You should have been able to control the aircraft much of the time with the CFI helping you (except takeoff and landing).

### **Was I challenged?**

The instructor's job is to challenge the student, yet not over burden or throw too much at the student to frustrate or overwhelm the student. After your first flight, you should feel like you do not know everything, but you can get it over time.

### **Did I learn anything?**

You must have learned something for the lesson to be of value. The official definition of learning is "a change of behavior as a result of experience". Did you learn something about how to control the aircraft or anything based on the experience. You should feel as though you can generally control the aircraft, yet know that you have much to learn to be a proficient pilot.

### **Did the instructor make it seem that a sport pilot license was obtainable?**

Do you feel as though you can do it. If you do that this instructor will help you. If you feel like it is too difficult and you are not capable, try another demo/intro flight school instructor.

### **Did the instructor offer to sign your logbook for this training time?**

It is a courtesy and a requirement for a Sport Pilot CFI to sign your logbook for training time. If you don't have a logbook, then they should provide one to you (possibly at a cost) for logging this official training time.

Good luck finding a flight school.

## **The Student Pilot**

In the PHAK they talk about a student pilot certificate which every Sport and Private Pilot candidate must get. This simple "Student Pilot Certificate" is easily obtained from any CFI, Sport or Private.

This is done through the FAA web site <https://iacra.faa.gov/iacra/>

You can get started by going in and registering and getting

\_\_\_\_\_ user name  
\_\_\_\_\_ Password  
\_\_\_\_\_ FTN number

After you get this, any CFI can verify your identity with a drivers license and apply for a Student Pilot Certificate.

Separate is the medical eligibility. Importantly note that the medical eligibility for a Sport Pilot is a driver's license. A FAA third Class Medical is only required for a Private Pilot. DO NOT APPLY FOR A FAA MEDICAL if there is any chance you will not pass it. They are VERY strict requirements and it does not take much to create a problem. In addition to current health, it should be understood that past DUI, past medications, past medical problems can easily flag "further investigations" and create an expensive time consuming processes that may or may not be solvable.

You can start as a Sport Pilot with a drivers license as medical eligibility and determine later if you want to obtain an FAA medical to move on to Private.