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PRIVATE PILOT REGULATIONS

Part 61

This regulatory summary is provided by Gold Seal Ground School to assist you as a supplemental study guide by presenting some of the most common aviation regulations in plain language. The summaries herein aim to simplify the complex language often found in the official Code of Federal Regulations (CFR).

Please note that this summary is not a replacement for the official CFR. It is essential for all aviators to be familiar with and understand the full legal texts of the regulations, as they govern all aspects of aviation operations and safety.

Utilize this guide as a tool to aid your comprehension and retention of regulatory requirements. For any questions or clarifications, always refer back to the official Code of Federal Regulations or consult with your instructors.

Review the lesson “Pilot Qualifications” in Section 1 of the ground school.

Required Documents for Pilots (14 CFR 61.3) - A logbook was required when you were a student pilot, but it is not required to be in the airplane with you once you become a private pilot. You do need to keep one to show currency, but are not required to carry it with you. You must have either on your person or available in the airplane:

- (1) your valid pilot certificate,
- (2) your valid medical certificate, or BasicMed and
- (3) a US or state government picture ID (e.g. driver's license or passport)

Each person who holds an airman certificate, medical certificate, or license required by this part must present it and their photo identification for inspection upon a request from:

- (1) The Administrator;
- (2) An authorized representative of the National Transportation Safety Board;
- (3) Any Federal, State, or local law enforcement officer; or
- (4) An authorized representative of the Transportation Security Administration.

Offenses Involving Alcohol or Drugs (14 CFR 61.15) - You must provide a written report of any motor vehicle action involving alcohol or drugs to the FAA no later than 60 days following the action.

Medical Certificate Duration (14 CFR 61.23) - A pilot certificate does not expire, but your medical certificate must be renewed periodically, based on your age and the class. A Class 3 medical certificate is valid for five years if you are under the age of 40, and valid for two years if you are 40 or over. It expires at midnight on the last day of the month two or five years from the date it was issued. For further details refer to the Pilot Qualifications lesson in Section 1.

Change of Name (14 CFR 61.25) - If you apply to change the name on your certificate, you must include your (1) Airman Certificate and (2) a copy of your marriage license, court order, or other document verifying the name change. The documents will be sent back after inspection.

Type Rating Requirements, Additional Training, and Authorization Requirements

(14 CFR 61.31) - To fly certain types of aircraft, such as a turbojet or turboprop powered aircraft, you need specific training and a type rating. You may not fly an airplane having an engine greater than 200 horsepower, retractable landing gear, or a tailwheel without additional training and logbook endorsements attesting to your satisfactory completion of that training.

You don't have to have your logbook on board the airplane (unless you are a student pilot flying solo), but you must possess one documenting the necessary requirements and endorsements for the type of flying you will be doing.

Specifically:

- **High Performance** - You may not act as PIC in a high-performance airplane, that is, one powered by more than 200 horsepower without an endorsement.
- **Complex Airplane** - You may not act as PIC in a complex airplane, that is, one with retractable landing gear, flaps, and a constant speed prop without an endorsement.
- **Tailwheel** - And you may not act as PIC in a tailwheel airplane without a separate endorsement.

Presentation of Required Documents (14 CFR 61.51(i)(1)) - You must keep a logbook that records your flight time necessary to show recency of experience and training toward a certificate or rating. This logbook serves as proof of your experience and qualifications. Each person who holds a pilot certificate or a medical certificate shall present it for inspection upon the request of the Administrator, the National Transportation Safety Board, or any federal, state and local law enforcement officer.

Flight Review (14 CFR 61.56) - You must complete a flight review within the previous 24 months. Your current flight review expires on the last day of the month. Acquiring a new certificate or rating counts as a flight review. The review includes flying and a discussion of current rules and procedures. For more information, refer to the VFR Pilot Currency lesson.

Recent Flight Experience, aka Currency (14 CFR 61.57) - To carry passengers during daylight hours, you must have made at least three takeoffs and landings within the preceding 90 days. They don't have to be full stop landings – touch and goes are fine. If your 90-day period has lapsed, you must either make these takeoffs and landing solo or with a certificated instructor on board.

To carry passengers during nighttime hours, you must also have made at least three takeoffs and landings within the preceding 90 days at night. These night landings, however, must be to a *full stop*. No touch and goes for nighttime currency requirements.

If you get a tailwheel endorsement at some point, you will have a similar requirement for takeoffs and landings within 90 days. In this case, regardless of whether it is day or night, landings in a tailwheel airplane must be to a full stop to qualify for currency.

For the sake of nighttime currency, night is defined as the period that begins one hour after sunset and ends one hour before sunrise. Night is one hour after sunset until one hour before sunrise.

For further information, refer to the VFR Pilot Currency lesson.

Change of Address (14 CFR 61.60) - The holder of a pilot, flight instructor, or ground instructor certificate who has made a change in permanent mailing address may not, after 30 days from that date, exercise the privileges of the certificate unless the holder has notified in writing the FAA, Airman Certification Branch of the new, permanent mailing address.

Glider Towing (14 CFR 61.69) - To tow gliders you must be at least a private pilot and have a minimum of 100 hours of PIC time in the category, class, and type of aircraft using to tow the glider.

You also must have a logbook endorsement certifying that you have received ground and flight training in gliders.

Within the preceding 24 months you must have:

(1) made at least three actual or simulated tows while accompanied by a qualified glider tow pilot; or

(2) made at least three flights as PIC of a glider being towed by an aircraft.

Private Pilot Eligibility Requirements: General (14 CFR 61.103) - To become a private pilot, you must meet age, language, and medical requirements, as well as hold a student pilot certificate.

Aeronautical Knowledge (14 CFR 61.105) - You need to understand various aviation topics such as FAA regulations, systems, aerodynamics, navigation, weather, flight planning, human factors, physiology, and more to become a private pilot.

Flight Proficiency (14 CFR 61.107) - You must demonstrate ability to perform certain maneuvers and procedures in the aircraft to earn your private pilot license.

Aeronautical Experience (14 CFR 61.109) - Specific amounts of flight time, including solo, cross-country, and night flying, are required for private pilot certification.

Private Pilot Privileges and Limitations (14 CFR 61.113) - As a private pilot, you may share operating expenses for a flight with passengers, but you must pay an equal share. (Only fuel, oil, and airport or rental fees may be split with passengers.)

You may operate carry passengers on business flights only if the flight is incidental to that business. That is, you cannot be paid to act as the pilot.

There are some exceptions for flights involving charities. Under certain circumstances you may act as PIC of an aircraft carrying passengers sponsored by a charitable organization for which the passengers make donations. The Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) must be notified at least 7 days in advance, and you must have a minimum of 500 hours total logged time. No aerobatic or formation flight may be flown, the flight must be conducted in day-VFR conditions, and the flight is non-stop, ending at the same airport from which it began.

BasicMed (14 CFR 68) - Pilots can operate without an FAA medical certificate under BasicMed if the following requirements are met:

- possess a valid driver's license;
- have held a medical certificate at any time after July 15, 2006;
- have not had the most recently held medical certificate revoked, suspended, or withdrawn;
- have not had the most recent application for airman medical certification completed and denied;
- have taken a medical education course within the past **24 calendar months**;
- have completed a comprehensive medical examination with a physician within the past 48 months;
- be under the care of a physician for certain medical conditions;
- have been found eligible for special issuance of a medical certificate for certain specified mental health, neurological, or cardiovascular conditions, when applicable;
- fly only aircraft weighing less than **12,500 pounds** and designed to carry no more than **7 occupants**;
- fly IFR (Instrument Flight Rules) or VFR (Visual Flight Rules) below **18,000 feet** at an airspeed not to exceed **250 knots**; and
- not fly for compensation or hire.