

Sport Pilot Rule Synopsis

[Printer-friendly version](#)

This is a synopsis of the definition of a light-sport aircraft category, the requirements to obtain a sport pilot certificate, and requirements to obtain a repairman certificate with a maintenance or inspection rating. More complete details can be found in the appropriate sections of the Sport Pilot web site.

Light-Sport Aircraft:

The FAA defines a light-sport aircraft as an aircraft, other than a helicopter or powered-lift that, since its original certification, has continued to meet the following:

- Maximum gross takeoff weight—1,320 lbs, or 1,430 lbs for seaplanes.
- Maximum stall speed—51 mph (45 knots) CAS
- Maximum speed in level flight with maximum continuous power (Vh)—138 mph (120 knots) CAS
- Single or two-seat aircraft only
- Single, reciprocating engine (if powered), including rotary or diesel engines
- Fixed or ground-adjustable propeller
- Unpressurized cabin
- Fixed landing gear, except for an aircraft intended for operation on water or a glider
- Can be manufactured and sold ready-to-fly under a new Special Light-Sport aircraft certification category. Aircraft must meet industry consensus standards. Aircraft under this certification may be used for sport and recreation, flight training, and aircraft rental.
- Can be licensed Experimental Light-Sport Aircraft (E-LSA) if kit- or plans-built. Aircraft under this certification may be used only for sport and recreation and flight instruction for the owner of the aircraft.
- Can be licensed Experimental Light-Sport Aircraft (E-LSA) if the aircraft has previously been operated as an ultralight but does not meet the FAR Part 103 definition of an ultralight vehicle. These aircraft must be transitioned to E-LSA category no later than January 31, 2008.
- Will have FAA registration—N-number.
- Aircraft category and class includes: Airplane (Land/Sea), Gyroplane, Airship, Balloon, Weight-Shift-Control ("Trike" Land/Sea), Glider, and Powered Parachute.
- U.S. or foreign manufacture of light-sport aircraft is authorized.
- Aircraft with a standard airworthiness certificate that meet above specifications may be flown by sport pilots. However, the aircraft must remain in standard category and cannot be changed to light-sport aircraft category. Holders of a sport pilot certificate may fly an aircraft with a standard airworthiness certificate if it meets the definition of a light-sport aircraft.
- May be operated at night if the aircraft is equipped per FAR 91.205, if such operations are allowed by the aircraft's operating limitations and the pilot holds at least a Private Pilot certificate and a minimum of a third-class medical.

The Sport Pilot Rule:

A sport pilot may exercise flight privileges in one or more of the following aircraft categories:

- Airplane (single-engine only)
- Glider
- Lighter-than-air (airship or balloon)
- Rotorcraft (gyroplane only)

- Powered Parachute
- Weight-Shift control aircraft(e.g. Trikes)

The sport pilot rule:

- Creates a new student sport pilot certificate
- Creates a new sport pilot flight instructor certificate.
- Requires FAA knowledge (written) and practical (flight) test.
- Credits sport pilot flight time toward more advanced pilot ratings.
- Requires either a 3rd class FAA medical certificate or a current and valid U.S. driver's license as evidence of medical eligibility (provided the individual's most recent application for an FAA medical certificate was not denied, revoked, suspended or withdrawn).
- Does not allow carrying passengers for compensation or hire
- Does not allow flights in furtherance of business
- Allows sharing ("pro-rata") operating expenses with another pilot.
- Allows daytime flight only.
- Allow sport pilots to fly vintage and production aircraft (standard airworthiness certificate) that meet the definition of a light-sport aircraft.

Sport Pilot Flight Instructors:

The new sport pilot/light-sport aircraft rule:

- Creates new sport pilot flight instructor certificate.
- Allows current CFI's to train sport pilots.

Repairmen Certificates

The sport pilot/light-sport aircraft rule creates a new Light-Sport Repairmen certificate—with either a maintenance or inspection rating. To earn an FAA repairman certificate of any type, you must:

- Be at least 18 years old
- Speak, read, and understand English
- Be a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident
- Demonstrate the requisite skill to determine whether an E-LSA or S-LSA is in a condition for safe operation
- For an Inspection rating—complete a **16 hour course** on the inspection requirements of the particular class of light-sport aircraft;
- For a Maintenance rating—complete a course – **120 hours** (airplane category); **104 hours** (weight shift or powered parachute); **80 hours** (glider or lighter-than-air) -- on the maintenance and inspection requirements of the particular class of light-sport aircraft.

Other LSA Maintenance Options

The annual condition inspection on *special light-sport airworthiness certificated aircraft*--can be completed by:

- An appropriately rated mechanic—that is, A&P
- An appropriately rated repair station; or
- A light-sport repairman with a maintenance rating.

Preventive maintenance can be performed by a certificated pilot (Sport Pilot rating or higher)

The annual condition inspection on *experimental light-sport airworthiness certificated aircraft*--can be completed by:

- An appropriately rated mechanic—that is, an A&P
- An appropriately rated repair station; or
- A light-sport repairman with a maintenance rating; or
- A light-sport repairman with an inspection rating (only on aircraft you own).

No rating is required to perform maintenance on experimental light-sport airworthiness certificated aircraft.