

Questions From Members

What's confusing you?

In the February 2006 issue, Joe Norris wrote, "Depending on the age of the applicant at the time of issuance, the student pilot certificate will expire either at the end of the 24th month or the 36th month after the date of issuance. (REF: 14 CFR 61.23(d)(3))"

I suspect you have heard from a number of flight instructors on this, but in case you haven't, Joe is citing the duration of a medical certificate, not a student pilot certificate. Student pilot certificates are only good for 24 calendar months regardless of the pilot's age. [REF: 14 CFR 61.19(b)]

Before the FAA changed the regulation on medical durations, the student pilot certificate and the third-class medical expired at the same time, after 24 months. With the change approximately 10 years ago to 36 months for third-class privileges prior to the applicant's 40th birthday, it is possible to have a valid medical with an expired student certificate on the back. The student must then have a new student certificate issued by a designated pilot examiner (DPE), flight standards district office, or other authorized authority to exercise his or her student pilot privileges.

Paul Jurgens,
Chief Instructor-Multiengine & Glider
Operations Sporty's Academy Inc.

Thanks, Paul. Yes, we've heard from many individuals, and you are correct; student pilot certificates are only valid for 24 months. Joe had corrected this error in a later e-mail to the original questioner, but

I didn't catch the correction when I was reviewing Q&As for this column.... Mary

Q. How does a holder of an instructor certificate, not current, become a sport pilot instructor without a medical?

Michael Hershey
Via e-mail

A. You will renew your existing instructor certificate under §61.199 by taking the CFI checkride. There is no requirement to have a current medical to take this checkride. (The DPE will need to have a current medical.) Once reinstated, you can then instruct at the CFI-SP level under §61.429.

What Is A Light-Sport Aircraft:

A LIGHT-SPORT AIRCRAFT IS ANY AIRPLANE (SINGLE-ENGINE ONLY), GLIDER, LIGHTER-THAN-AIR (AIRSHIP OR BALLOON), ROTORCRAFT (GYROPLANE ONLY), POWERED PARACHUTE, OR WEIGHT-SHIFT CONTROL AIRCRAFT (TRIKE) THAT MEETS THE FOLLOWING PARAMETERS.

- Maximum gross takeoff weight: 1,320 lbs. (599 kg.), 1,430 lbs. for seaplanes.
- Lighter-than-air light-sport aircraft maximum gross weight: 660 lbs. (300 kg.).
- Maximum stall speed-51 mph (45 knots).
- Maximum speed in level flight with maximum continuous power (Vh)-138 mph (120 knots).
- Two-place maximum (pilot and one passenger).
- Single, non-turbine engine only, includes 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.
- Will have an FAA registration N-number.
- Aircraft with a standard airworthiness certificate that meet above specifications may be flown by sport pilots.

For more information, visit www.sportpilot.org.

To Become A Sport Pilot:

TO EARN A SPORT PILOT CERTIFICATE, ONE MUST:

- Be at least 16 years old to become a student sport pilot (14 for glider).
- Be at least 17 years old to test for a sport pilot certificate (16 for gliders).
- Be able to read, write, and understand English.
- Hold a current airman's medical certificate or a current and valid U.S. driver's license as evidence of medical eligibility (provided the FAA didn't deny, revoke, or suspend the pilot's last medical certificate application).
- Pass an FAA sport pilot knowledge test.
- Pass an FAA sport pilot practical (flight) test.

THE MINIMUM REQUIRED TRAINING TIME FOR THE DIFFERENT LIGHT-SPORT AIRCRAFT CATEGORIES:

- Airplane: 20 hours
- Powered Parachute: 12 hours
- Weight-Shift-Control (trikes): 20 hours
- Glider: 10 hours
- Rotorcraft (gyroplane only): 20 hours
- Lighter-Than-Air: 20 hours (airship) or 7 hours (balloon)

Also, if you start instructing sport pilots, please sign up on our sport pilot instructor listing.

www.sportpilot.org/instructors.
Charlie Becker

Q. I am confused about the sport pilot regulation. Previously there were category, class, and type ratings for aircraft, and three pilot certificates—recreational, private, and commercial. To that you could add glider, instrument, and seaplane ratings, etc.

Now, there are multiple sport pilot certificates, but are they really certificates to someone who holds a private or commercial certificate? Is it another certificate or just another rating? And, if so, can you earn a sport pilot certificate/rating and satisfy the requirement for your biennial in the process?

Dave Miller
Via e-mail

A. The sport pilot certificate is a new FAA pilot certificate that went into effect on

September 1, 2004. It is a pilot certificate in the same manner as a recreational, private, commercial, or airline transport pilot certificate. Regulatory information on the sport pilot certificate is contained in 14 CFR Part 61, along with information on all the other pilot certificates.

The sport pilot certificate is the new, basic level certificate. Holders of recreational or higher certificates are not required to hold a separate sport pilot certificate if they choose to operate at the sport pilot level.

The holder of a sport pilot certificate does not gain ratings in the traditional way. There are no ratings listed on a sport pilot certificate. Instead, holders of sport pilot certificates gain privileges to operate various classes of aircraft (airplane, powered parachute, weight-shift control, gliders, gyroplanes, and lighter-than-air). These privileges are recorded via appropriate logbook endorsements from authorized instructors. There are also endorsements for "sets" of aircraft within the classes, and other endorse-

ments for additional privileges a sport pilot may wish to gain. The sport pilot must carry these endorsements with him or her when exercising the privileges of the sport pilot certificate.

Holders of higher-level certificates may choose to operate at the sport pilot level using their existing pilot certificate. As mentioned above, they do not need to have a separate sport pilot certificate. They can simply choose to operate at the sport pilot level. They may do this within the category/class ratings shown on their higher-level certificate, and they also may add privileges at the sport pilot level using the endorsement process mentioned above.

All pilots, regardless of certificate level, must have a flight review in accordance with 14 CFR 61.56.

EAA's sport pilot website, www.sportpilot.org, has a wealth of information about the rule. Take some time to look over the information posted there, then let me know if you have further questions.

Joe Norris

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