

The Ultralight Pilot Transitioning Deadline ...

Some tips for the process

January 31, 2007, the deadline for ultralight pilots choosing to transition to sport pilot status and receive full credit for their ultralight flying experience, is just around the corner. On more than one occasion, EAA suggested the FAA extend that deadline because the infrastructure needed to accommodate transitioning pilots was slow to develop. However, that request was met with a resounding no. If you still need to accomplish that task, here's how to proceed:

Registered Ultralight Pilot on or Before September 1, 2004

Ultralight pilots who registered with a training program offered by EAA, Aero Sports Connection (ASC), or the United States Ultralight Association (USUA) prior to September 1, 2004, may obtain a sport pilot certificate no later than January 31, 2007, by doing the following:

1. Obtain a copy of your ultralight pilot records from the organization with which you are registered. (See Online Resources for numerous website links.)
2. Pass the FAA sport pilot knowledge (written) test administered by an FAA testing facility.
3. Pass the FAA sport pilot practical (checkride) test, which includes an oral and flight test administered by a sport pilot examiner (SPE). Ultralight pilots registered on or before September 1, 2004, do *not* need an endorsement from a certificated flight instructor (CFI) to take either the knowledge test or the practical test. A certified copy of your ultralight training records is all that is needed; no student pilot certificate is required. As a practical matter, however, a student pilot

certificate may be needed so the ultralight pilot can fly his or her registered/certificated aircraft solo prior to taking the practical test with the examiner.

Registered Ultralight Pilot After September 1, 2004

Ultralight pilots who registered with EAA, ASC, or the USUA *after* September 1, 2004, or those pilots registered before September 1, 2004 who miss the January 31-2007 deadline, still may use the aeronautical experience (flight hours) they obtained in ultralight vehicles to meet the experience requirements to obtain a sport pilot certificate.

For example, the 20 hours of flight experience required for a sport pilot-airplane privilege could be flown in an ultralight vehicle. However, the flight time must be accumulated after the date registered as an ultralight student and properly logged per FAA requirements. Any flight instruction an ultralight pilot receives from an ultralight flight instructor should be properly logged and endorsed by the ultralight flight instructor in the same way a CFI would endorse a student's logbook after a flight lesson. This flight instruction then may be used to meet the flight proficiency requirements to become a sport pilot. (See FAR 61.311.) Candidates need to get a copy of their certified ultralight training records to verify they are registered.

These post-September 1, 2004, registered ultralight pilots must complete the following:

1. Obtain a copy of your ultralight pilot records from the organization with which you are registered.
2. Obtain an endorsement from an FAA CFI to take the knowledge test.

3. Pass the FAA sport pilot knowledge test administered by an FAA testing facility.

4. Show they meet the minimum flight time requirements and log three hours of flight training with a CFI in preparation for the sport pilot practical test no less than 60 days prior to practical test.

5. Obtain an endorsement from a CFI to take the practical test.

6. Pass the sport pilot practical test, which includes an oral and flight test administered by an SPE or a designated pilot examiner (DPE).

Ultralight Pilots Not Yet Registered

Ultralight pilots who have not yet registered with any organization may earn credit for their ultralight training and flight hours. To do so, they must register as an ultralight student or ultralight pilot with one of the organizations (EAA, ASC, USUA) and then obtain training and log that time as well as any additional flight hours flown. The EAA records-request page has been modified to allow ultralighters to get certification even if they are only registered as a student pilot (which is all the regulation requires); visit https://Secure.EAA.org/ultralights/ultralight_records.html.

After completing that process, those pilots must follow the six steps listed under "Registered Ultralight Pilot After September 1, 2004" above to earn a sport pilot certificate. This option is valid even after the January 31, 2007, deadline passes.

Ultralight Pilots Who Never Register

If an ultralight pilot chooses to never register with EAA, ASC, or USUA but later decides to become a sport pilot,

he or she will receive no credit for previous ultralight training or flight time. Ultralight pilots who choose this route will have to meet the training requirements outlined for a new sport pilot in full.

A word to the wise would suggest that even if an ultralight pilot does not anticipate becoming a sport pilot at this time, registering and logging ultralight training and flight time may prove valuable if his or her plans change in the future.

EAA to Continue to Support Ultralight Training

EAA and its Ultralight Council are working to ensure that ultralight pilots have access to thorough training even after the current FAA exemption for ultralight flight training expires on January 31, 2008.

The FAA ultralight training exemption allowed the use of two-place ultralight aircraft to teach prospective ultralight pilots. The movement of those two-place training aircraft into the light-sport aircraft category as part of the sport pilot/light-sport aircraft rule has sparked questions on how future ultralight pilots will receive adequate instruction.

"We know there is a significant segment of the recreational flying community who would prefer to fly, or continue flying, ultralights under FAA Part 103," said Timm Bogenhagen, EAA's ultralight programs manager. "EAA is committed to supporting them and ensuring their safe operations, just as EAA has since the beginning of the ultralight movement in the early 1980s."

The EAA Ultralight Council, an advisory group of experienced ultralight enthusiasts who volunteer their time to help set EAA's ultralight policies and design programs, explored this issue at its fall meetings in Oshkosh October 27-28. The council made a series of recommendations to maintain the growth and vitality of the ultralight community as an economical, safe, and fun way to experience flight.

The council recommends the following:

- Maintain the ultralight student, pilot, and vehicle registration programs;
- Continue cooperation with the USUA and ASC, who along with EAA have trained and endorsed ultralight instructors for more than a decade;

- Explore ways for student ultralight pilots to receive flight instruction from certificated flight instructors, using aircraft that have similar flight characteristics as ultralights;

- Find ways to use sport pilot test standards as an additional instruction standard for ultralight training; and

- Expand ultralight-specific training materials for each category of ultralights.

"Ultralights have become an important part of the recreational flight community over the past 25 years, and it's crucial that this unique entry point into the world of flight remains vibrant into the future," Bogenhagen said.

EAA Seeks Changes to SP/LSA Rule

In addition to its continuing support of ultralight fliers, EAA is working to ease transition issues for those choosing to become sport pilots. Over the past several months EAA has submitted several petitions to the FAA seeking to resolve various issues:

- FAA-2006-24262...which seeks authority for sport pilot instructors in powered parachute (PPC) and weight-shift control (WSC) aircraft to train private pilots in those categories of LSA.

- FAA-2006-24622...which seeks authority to allow owners of PPC and WSC aircraft to place their N numbers in reasonable locations.

- FAA-2006-24623...which seeks authority to allow ultralight pilots to continue flying their newly N-numbered ultralights (now E-LSA) until they take their sport pilot checkride.

- FAA-2006-24624...which seeks authority for sport pilot instructor candidates to take their checkrides without having to provide an aircraft certified for spins for the flight.


- FAA-2006-24742...which seeks authority for a sport pilot to conduct preventive maintenance on an LSA qualifying type-certificated aircraft and sign off that maintenance in the aircraft logbook.

- FAA-2006-25254...which seeks authority to add category and class information to sport pilot certificates.

- FAA-2006-25902...which seeks authority for transitioning ultralight pilots flying single-seat aircraft to be considered the pilot in command for their initial sport pilot practical flight evaluation.

Randy Hansen, EAA's government affairs director, encourages interested parties to comment on these exemp-

tion requests. However, commenters must do so via a Department of Transportation (DOT) website (the FAA functions within the DOT). To find the petitions, go to the DOT DMS website at <http://DMS.DOT.gov/search/search-FormSimple.cfm> and in the search block enter the last five numbers of the petition number; that is, for FAA-2006-24622, enter 24622, then click on Search to bring up the all the documents associated with this specific petition.

EAA will continue to press the FAA to resolve these and other inconsistencies within the SP/LSA rule to ease the transition for ultralight pilots and others wishing to fly as sport pilots. 

ONLINE RESOURCES:

- To learn more about transitioning to sport pilot status, visit EAA's sport pilot website, www.SportPilot.org/interest/ultralight_pilots.html

- To obtain your ultralight records from EAA, visit https://Secure.EAA.org/ultralights/ultralight_records.html.

- For a list of testing centers, visit http://www.FAA.gov/education_research/testing/airmen/media/test_centers.pdf

- To find an examiner in your area, visit www.FAA.gov/licenses_certificates/airmen_certification/sport_pilot/.

- To study for the sport pilot knowledge and practical test, order the King School sport pilot study courses from www.kingschools.com

- To take a practice test for the sport pilot knowledge (written) test, visit <http://Exams4Pilots.org>, and change the Exam to Sport Pilot. For a list of testing centers, visit http://www.FAA.gov/education_research/testing/airmen/media/test_centers.pdf. The written test is valid for two years. Pilots may use the Lasergrade, CATS, or CompUSA facilities.

- To study for the sport pilot practical (checkride) test, download a copy of the practical test standards (PTS). This PTS outlines the skills you must be able to demonstrate to obtain a sport pilot certificate.

Obtain the Airplane PTS at: www.FAA.gov/education_research/testing/airmen/test_standards/pilot/media/FAA-S-8081-29.pdf

Obtain the PPC and WSC PTS at: www.FAA.gov/education_research/testing/airmen/test_standards/pilot/media/FAA-S-8081-31.pdf