



# Sport Pilot Sourcebook



## A New Aviation Horizon

In 2004, the FAA created sport pilot/light-sport aircraft (SP/LSA) regulations. The most significant change in FAA regulations in 50 years, it allows easier and lower-cost access for those wishing to participate in the joy of flight. For the past 60 years, EAA has been a leader in providing people with more opportunities to take to the sky.

Because of EAA's efforts, flying has become less expensive and easier than ever before. You can become a sport pilot with as few as 20 hours of flight instruction. You can fly a one- or two-seat aircraft capable of speeds up to 138 mph. And in most cases, you can pass the medical requirements just by showing your driver's license. That's not all....

### Now You Can:

- > Obtain an FAA pilot certificate at a lower cost and with less time commitment than ever before.
- > Fly a sport pilot-eligible aircraft with your driver's license serving as evidence of medical eligibility.
- > Build an approved light-sport aircraft kit that's as much as 99% complete from the factory.
- > Fly interesting alternative aircraft such as powered parachutes, weight shift-controlled (trikes), gliders, gyroplanes, or balloons.

## The Sport Pilot Rule and You

The sport pilot rule is more than just a new pilot certificate. It's an entire plan to lower the barriers to participation in aviation. It addresses everything from getting that first entry-level pilot certificate to creating a new way of certificating ready-to-fly aircraft that are much more affordable than most aircraft currently on the market.

### Here's how the sport pilot rule affects you:

- > Creates a new sport pilot certificate for operating any aircraft that meets the definition of a light-sport aircraft (LSA).
- > Creates a new sport pilot flight instructor certificate.
- > Creates FAA knowledge and practical flight tests just for sport pilots.
- > Credits sport pilot flight time toward advanced pilot ratings.
- > Allows you to prove medical fitness by either a current and valid U.S. driver's license or an FAA third-class medical certificate.



## What are the Sport Pilot **Privileges** and **Limitations**

When operating as a sport pilot, you as the pilot must operate within the following guidelines of the sport pilot certificate:

### **Privileges:**

- > Fly during the daytime using visual flight rules (VFR). Three statute miles visibility and visual contact with the ground is required.
- > Cross-country flying anywhere in the U.S.
- > Fly up to 10,000 feet above mean sea level (MSL) or 2,000 feet AGL, whichever is higher.
- > Fly solo or with one passenger.
- > Can share operating expenses with another person.
- > Fly in Class E and G airspace (and B, C, and D airspace with appropriate training).
- > Allows sport pilots to fly production (standard airworthiness certificate) and experimental amateur-built aircraft that meet the definition of a light-sport aircraft.
- > Allows rental of special light-sport aircraft (S-LSA).

### **Limitations:**

- > Prohibited from Class A airspace.
- > Prohibited from flying in Class B, C, or D airspace until you receive training and a logbook endorsement from an instructor.
- > No flights outside the U.S. without prior permission from the foreign aviation authority.
- > May not tow any object.
- > No flights while carrying a passenger or property for compensation, hire, or for furtherance of a business.



## How to Become a Sport Pilot

To become a sport pilot, you first earn a sport pilot certificate. This requires you to be at least 17 years old (16 for glider or balloon), hold a valid state driver's license or a current FAA third-class medical certificate, pass an FAA sport pilot knowledge test, and pass an FAA sport pilot practical (flight) test.

**The minimum required training time for the different categories of LSA are:**



**Airplane:**  
20 hours



**Weight-Shift-Controlled:**  
20 hours



**Gyroplane:**  
20 hours



**Powered Parachute:**  
12 hours



**Glider:**  
10 hours



**Balloon:**  
7 hours



## Medical Requirements

Generally, sport pilots are allowed to use their state driver's license to establish medical fitness. They must also follow any restrictions or limitations listed on their driver's license. In addition, every pilot—from sport pilot to airline transport pilot—must determine before each flight that he or she is medically fit to operate their aircraft in a safe manner. As a pilot, it is your responsibility to ensure that your current medical health in no way jeopardizes the safety of a flight.

### Adding an **Additional Category/Class Privilege** as a Sport Pilot

If you receive your sport pilot certificate in one category of aircraft and want to start flying another, you may do so by taking the following 3 steps:

1. Receive training from an instructor in the knowledge and operation areas required for the new category/class. Your instructor will endorse your logbook when you are proficient.
2. Successfully complete a proficiency check from another instructor (other than the one who trained you). Upon successful completion of the proficiency check, the instructor will endorse your logbook certifying that you may fly the new category/class.
3. Your instructor will complete FAA Form 8710-11 and submit it to the FAA Airmen Certification Branch in order to have the new category/class recorded in your airman record.

### Existing Pilot Operating as a Sport Pilot

One of the benefits of the new sport pilot regulation is that it allows individuals with higher-level pilot certificates (e.g., private, commercial, etc.) to operate under sport pilot privileges. The FAA has made this transition very easy in that there is no special certificate, endorsement, or test that an existing pilot needs in order to make this transition. However, existing pilots who've had their most recent FAA medical certificate or application denied, revoked, withdrawn, or suspended by the FAA, are not allowed to operate using their driver's license until they clear the denial from their airman record by having a valid third-class medical certificate issued. To access additional resources regarding medical requirements, visit the Members Only section of [www.eaa.org](http://www.eaa.org) and click on the EAA Aeromedical Advisory link.

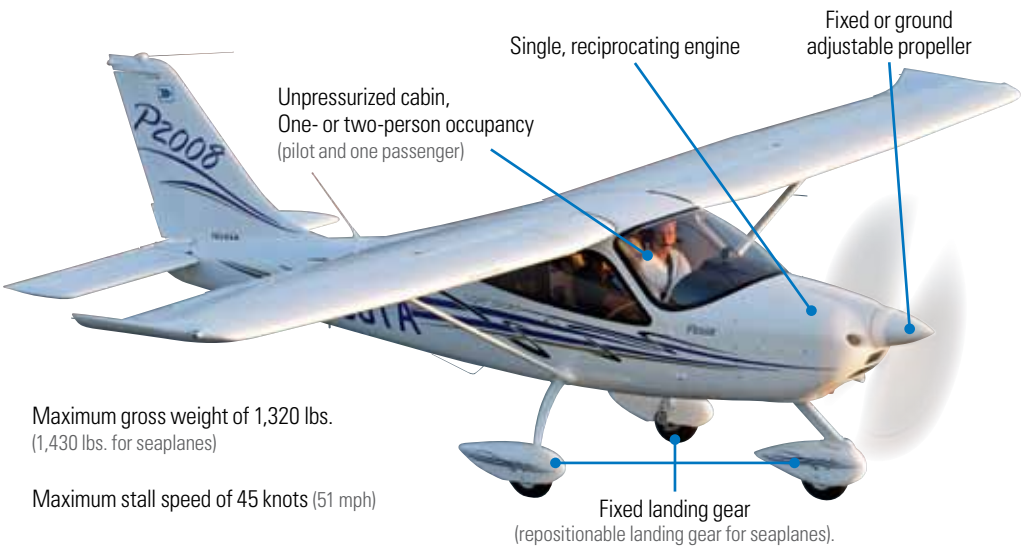
#### **Here's all that's necessary:**

- > Your existing pilot certificate.
- > Meet the medical requirements of a sport pilot.
- > A current flight review recorded in your logbook.
- > Fly an aircraft that meets the performance definition of an LSA.
- > Operate within the privileges and limitations of the sport pilot certificate.
- > Operate within your category/class ratings.

A flight review can be accomplished in any aircraft for which you are rated. If the flight review is accomplished in an aircraft that does not meet the definition of a light-sport aircraft (LSA) and you do not hold a valid FAA medical certificate, or if your previous flight review has expired, the flight instructor conducting the flight review will have to act as pilot-in-command (PIC) for the flight portion of the review.

## What is a **Light-Sport Aircraft (LSA)**?

The FAA defines light-sport aircraft as a simple-to-operate, easy-to-fly aircraft that, since initial certification, has continued to meet the following performance definition:



Maximum gross weight of 1,320 lbs.  
(1,430 lbs. for seaplanes)

Maximum stall speed of 45 knots (51 mph)

## Special Light-Sport Aircraft (S-LSA)

The FAA regulations created a special light-sport aircraft (S-LSA) category. An S-LSA is a factory-built, ready-to-fly aircraft that has met ASTM consensus standards for design, production, quality assurance, maintenance, and continuing airworthiness. They are required to be maintained and inspected by either an FAA certificated repairman with an LSA maintenance rating, an A&P, or an authorized repair station. Pilots are allowed to perform preventative maintenance on their S-LSA with appropriate training.

## Buying an S-LSA

The first step is to read aviation publications, such as *EAA Sport Aviation* magazine, to learn more about the various S-LSA's on the market. Once you've found an aircraft you're interested in, check EAA's listing of S-LSA's on [www.sportpilot.org](http://www.sportpilot.org) to determine if the manufacturer has received an S-LSA airworthiness certificate. The next step is to find out if the manufacturer is a member of the Light Aircraft Manufacturing Association (LAMA) so you'll have some assurance that they have adequately complied with ASTM consensus standards.

We advise you to use care in selecting and purchasing an aircraft to use under sport pilot privileges. Aircraft certificated in other categories, such as experimental-exhibition, have restrictions making them less desirable for general use and the FAA has stated that no airworthiness certificate changes will be allowed in the future. Therefore,

aircraft certificated as experimental-exhibition, for example, cannot be changed to light-sport aircraft. If in doubt about certification, EAA members should contact EAA Member Services at 800-JOIN-EAA for assistance.

## What are **ASTM Consensus Standards**?

For S-LSA's, airworthiness of light-sport aircraft falls under the new set of rules called consensus standards, established by ASTM International. The light-sport aircraft ASTM consensus standards address aircraft design, production, and airworthiness. They also allow government, industry, and consumers to work together to develop standards that will ensure safety without the expense of current aircraft certification rules. This new approach to certification allows for the production of more affordable, safe, and modern factory-built aircraft.

## E-LSA Kits

The FAA has allowed manufacturers to market an aircraft that complies with S-LSA design, production, maintenance, and continuing airworthiness consensus standards as a kit that requires only minor assembly. The final assembly, however, must be done in accordance with a factory-supplied, final assembly manual that complies with the appropriate ASTM consensus standard. Only manufacturers that have already received an S-LSA airworthiness certificate are eligible to offer an E-LSA Kit.

## Standard Category Aircraft

A sport pilot can fly any aircraft that meets the LSA performance definition, regardless of what FAA airworthiness certificate the aircraft holds. In other words, a standard category aircraft like a J-3 Cub, Aeronca 7AC Champ, or Ercoupe 415C qualify as LSA's and may be flown by sport pilots. For a complete listing of standard category aircraft that meet the performance definition of an LSA, go to [www.sportpilot.org](http://www.sportpilot.org). The maintenance rules for these aircraft remain unchanged.

## Experimental Amateur-Built Aircraft

A sport pilot can fly any aircraft that meets the LSA performance definition, regardless of what FAA airworthiness certificate the aircraft holds. An experimental amateur-built or "homebuilt" aircraft like a Sonex, Rans S-19 or Zenith 750 qualify as LSA's and therefore may be flown by sport pilots. For a complete listing of homebuilt aircraft that meet the performance definition of an LSA, go to [www.sportpilot.org](http://www.sportpilot.org). The maintenance rules for these aircraft also remain unchanged.

## Insurance for Sport Pilots and Their Aircraft

The EAA Aircraft Insurance Plan has coverage available for most sport pilots. For a free quote, call 866/647-4322 or visit [www.eaa.org/insurance](http://www.eaa.org/insurance). If you already have insurance and are switching to operate under sport pilot privileges, you need to discuss this change with your insurance provider to ensure your coverage continues while operating as a sport pilot.

## LSA Maintenance Requirements

### Repairman Certificate

The two new FAA repairman certificate ratings are titled Inspection and Maintenance. To earn either of these certificates, you must:

- > Be at least 18 years old.
- > Speak, read, and understand English.
- > Complete the amount of training appropriate for the rating.
- > Be a U.S. citizen or permanent legal resident.



### Inspection Rating

This rating allows you to conduct the annual condition inspection on your own E-LSA. It requires the successful completion of an FAA-accepted, 16-hour course on the inspection of your particular class of LSA.

### Maintenance Rating

This commercial rating allows you to perform the annual condition inspection on S-LSA's and E-LSA's for compensation. It requires the completion of a course on the maintenance requirements of various light-sport aircraft (airplanes: 120 hours, weight-shift and powered parachutes: 104 hours, gliders and lighter-than-air: 80 hours). What repairs and maintenance you can perform are specifically authorized in the aircraft manufacturer's maintenance manual.

## Becoming a Sport-Pilot Instructor

Sport pilot regulations make it easier to become a flight instructor and training new pilots.

To become a certified flight instructor-sport pilot (CFI-SP), you must receive and log ground and flight instruction with a currently certified flight instructor. You'll be required to learn the fundamentals of aeronautical knowledge, instruction, and flight training required for instructing sport pilots. A CFI-SP has the same medical requirements as a sport pilot. You must simply hold a sport pilot certificate; an instrument or commercial rating is not required. In addition, you must have at least the following minimum aeronautical experience:

Category .....	Minimum Logged Flight Time
Airplane .....	150 hours
Weight-shift-controlled .....	150 hours
Rotorcraft/Gyroplane .....	125 hours
Lighter-than-air/airship .....	100 hours
Powered-parachute .....	100 hours
Glider .....	25 hours

Once your instructor is satisfied that you've met the requirements, you will then need to pass the knowledge test, a fundamentals of instruction test, and a practical test.

### Existing Certified Flight Instructors (under §61 subpart H)

If you're already a certified flight instructor (CFI), you don't need any additional preparation to train sport pilots within your category/class. However, you will need to know and understand the new sport pilot regulations.

### Looking Beyond The Horizon

EAA has worked with government and industry for more than ten years to create a safe and affordable new way to enjoy personal flight. Because of this effort, participating in aviation has now become more accessible than ever before. You're able to earn a sport pilot certificate without many of the time and expense barriers that accompany the pursuit of a private pilot certificate. And the wide variety of affordable aircraft that constitute the light-sport aircraft category represent more opportunities to own your own aircraft.

These historic changes mark the beginning of a bright new era for aviation. One that we can all look forward to participating in.





## Start **Your** Sport Pilot Journey with Us!

EAA makes aviation participation easier, more accessible, and more fun! Take the first step toward turning your flying dreams into a reality join our family. You receive...

- > Our #1 member benefit: *EAA Sport Aviation* magazine delivered to your door every month. Delivered digitally too!
- > EAA's custom e-Newsletters – one for every aviation passion
- > Opportunity to join local EAA Chapters – find one near you at [EAA.org/chapters](http://EAA.org/chapters)
- > An organization to stand up for your rights to fly as a sport pilot
- > Access to EAA SportAir Workshops
- > Hints for Homebuilders how-to aircraft construction videos
- > EAA Experts on staff to answer your sport pilot and light-sport aircraft questions
- > Webinars and webinar archives on sport pilot topics – watch from the comfort of your home!
- > Access to EAA Sport Aviation online archive – 60 years of magazines at your fingertips!
- > EAA insurance specific to your sport pilot needs
- > Members-Only Discounts
  - LaserGrade testing for sport pilot certificates
  - EAA AirVenture Oshkosh
  - SportAir Workshops
  - Aircraft insurance
  - and much more!
- > Free admission to the EAA AirVenture Museum and access to over 300 science and technology museums around the world with the ASTC Passport Program

Plus: Stay connected to other sport pilot enthusiasts at [EAAForums.org](http://EAAForums.org), EAA's online community.

Find out more about EAA membership—and the fun we have—at [EAA.org/join](http://EAA.org/join).

Don't miss out—**join today!**



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