



SPORT PILOT/LIGHT SPORT AIRCRAFT

An overview as compiled by USUA Special Advisor Jon Thornburgh (A30492)

LIGHT SPORT AIRCRAFT

- * The allowable gross weight is 1,320 pounds. Aircraft operated on water can weigh 1,430 pounds.
- * The stall speed must be not greater than 45 knots, max speed: 120 knots.
- * LSA cannot have an in-flight adjustable propeller or retractable gear.
- * Seaplanes can have "repositionable gear." The rule specifically says that the gear must be operated in either the down position throughout the entire flight, or in the up position throughout the entire flight. In other words, it appears that an amphibious seaplane may not take off from land with the gear down, raise the gear, and then land on water. This seems to preclude the Aventura from qualifying as an LSA.
- * An LSA can have only one engine
- * Hang gliders and foot-launched powered and unpowered paragliders are specifically excluded from being LSA, and a Sport Pilot certificate does not allow a sport pilot to fly a tandem hang glider or tandem paraglider.
- * Weight-shift trikes are limited to two-axis control only. No rudder is allowed for yaw control.

SPORT PILOTS

- * Contrary to the Sport Pilot NPRM, a sport pilot need not obtain a logbook endorsement for each make and model that he wants to fly. The FAA will create a "set" of similar LSA make and models. You'll need additional instruction and an instructor's logbook endorsement for each new make and model "set" that you want to check out in.
- * Sport Pilot Instructors must have 5 hours of PIC in each make and model set before they can teach in that aircraft.
- * Powered parachutes are divided into "land" and "sea" classes.
- * Pilots will be allowed to take a practical test (flight test) in a single seat LSA. The examiner will observe him from the ground. The pilot will have a "single-seat" limitation on his certificate.
- * Sport pilots will have to take a biennial flight review (BFI). A pilot with a "single-seat" limitation will still have to take a BFI, and he will have to take it in a two seat LSA.
- * The "driver's license medical" is not as liberal as many people thought it would be. If you have failed your aviation medical exam, you cannot fly with just a driver's license. If you lose your driver's license for any reason (like failure to have insurance) you cannot fly an LSA (unless you get a third class medical.) If your doctor tells you that you can't operate a motor vehicle (vision impairment, taking prescription drugs, etc.) you cannot fly an LSA.
- * A sport pilot may not fly above 10,000 feet MSL. He cannot fly above 10,000 feet even to cross over high terrain. (If you live near Denver, you won't be able to fly more than 5,000 feet AGL.)
- * A sport pilot must have at least 3 miles visibility to fly.
- * No night flying.
- * No towing.
- * You cannot demonstrate LSA for sale if you are a "salesman." (The definition of a "salesman" is not given.)
- * A sport pilot may fly in airspace where radio control is required, but only with additional training and a logbook endorsement.

* Although an LSA is allowed to have a top speed (in level flight) of 120 knots, a sport pilot must have additional training and a logbook endorsement to fly an LSA with a level flight speed of more than 87 knots.

LSA MAINTENANCE

- * On "Special" LSA (those LSA delivered "turn-key" flyable by the manufacturer,) you are only allowed to do "preventative maintenance", and only if you are the owner of the Special LSA. (Preventive maintenance options are listed in FAR Part 43, Appendix "A".) If you want to do an annual inspection you must attend a 16-hour maintenance course. The 16-hour course only allows you to inspect your airplane for defects, it does not allow you to perform maintenance on the airplane.
- * If you want to do actual maintenance on the aircraft, you must attend a maintenance course of 80 hours for gliders and lighter-than-air aircraft, 120 hours for airplanes and 104 hours for weight-shift (trikes) and powered parachutes. (The original NPRM proposed 80 hours.) Maintenance students must pass a maintenance knowledge test with a score of at least 80%.
- An applicant for an LSA repairman certificate must take a maintenance course for each class of LSA
- * LSA will be subject to Airworthiness Directives ("AD") notices
- * Maintenance must be performed in accordance with the general aviation standards of FAR Part 43.
- * There can be no alternations made to an LSA unless it is approved by the manufacturer or the FAA.

LSA EQUIPMENT

- * All two-seat LSAs must have an ELT.
- * LSA will be required to have a transponder to fly within Class B and Class C airspace, and the Class B "Mode C veil."
- * LSA must comply with FAR 91.213 (Inoperative Equipment) also known as the "Minimum Equipment List." This means that if you're on a cross-country flight and your tachometer breaks, you cannot fly home until it's fixed.

ULTRALIGHT TRAINING

- * The two-seat ultralight Exemption for ultralight training will expire on January 31, 2008. After then, ultralight BFs and AFIs will cease to exist.
- * All "fat" single seat ultralights and all two-seat ultralight trainers must be FAA inspected and converted to "experimental" LSA by August 31, 2007. (Apparently, if an ultralight trainer is not converted by August 31, 2007 it may still be used as an ultralight trainer until January 31, 2008, after which it must be junked.)
- * After an ultralight trainer is converted to an experimental LSA a Sport Pilot Instructor may use the converted experimental LSA as a Sport Pilot trainer (for compensation) until September 1, 2009.
- * An ultralight pilot must register with a national ultralight organization (ASC, EAA, USUA) by September 1, 2004 if he wants to have his ultralight flight time to count toward his sport pilot license. He must then take his Sport Pilot practical test by January 31, 2007.
- * Prospective LSA examiners who inspect and issue experimental LSA airworthiness certificates (DPEs) must attend a three-day FAA course.

SPORT PILOT TRAINING

- * Prospective Sport Pilot Examiners must attend a 5-day FAA course.
- * Sport pilot instructors must have 150 hours of flight time.
- A sport pilot must be at least 17 years old, an Sport Pilot instructor 18 years.

This an abbreviated summary of the minimum required flight experience to be a sport pilot:

Airplane: 20 hours total, 75 mile solo cross country
Glider: 10 hours total

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Gyroplane: 20 hours total, 50 mile solo cross country

Powered parachute: 12 hours total, 10 mile solo cross country

Weight shift (trike): 20 hours total, 50 miles solo cross country

This an abbreviated summary of the minimum required flight experience to be a private pilot weight shift or powered parachute:

Powered parachute: 25 hours total, including 3 hours of night flight, and a 25 mile solo cross country

Weight-shift: 40 hours total, including 3 hours of night flying with a 75 mile night cross country, and a 100 mile solo cross country

Summary of sport pilot instructor requirements:

--18 years of age

--Knowledge exams on aeronautics and fundamental of instruction

--Practical test

--Have a sport pilot certificate or higher rating. A sport pilot instructor may teach private pilot weight-shift or private pilot powered parachute if the sport pilot instructor has at least a private pilot rating himself.

--Required flight time:

Airplane: 150 hours total time, 25 hours of cross country time

Glider: 25 hours flight time

Gyroplane: 125 hours flight time (at least 50 hours in a gyroplane) and 10 hours cross country

Weight-shift: 150 hours total (50 in weight-shift,) 25 hours cross country

Powered parachute: 100 hours total (50 in a powered parachute,) 15 hours cross country

--5 hours in the same make and model "set"

--The sport pilot instructor must renew his instructor's certificate every two years, just as a general aviation instructor must do

--an ultralight instructor must transition to sport pilot instructor by January 31, 2008 if he wants credit for his ultralight flight time

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IMPORTANT DEADLINES TO REMEMBER:

September 1, 2004

Effective date of the Sport Pilot rule. Deadline for an ultralight pilot to register with a national ultralight organization in order to have his ultralight flight time count toward his sport pilot certificate

August 31, 2005

Deadline for recreational pilots and higher rated pilots to acquire the necessary flight time to apply for a category and class rating limited to a specific make and model of experimental aircraft

January 31, 2007

Deadline for an ultralight pilot to take his sport pilot practical test if he wants his ultralight flight time to count toward his required sport pilot flight experience

August 31, 2007

Last day that an experimental certificate will be issued to a "fat" ultralight or two-seat trainer

January 31, 2008

Deadline for an ultralight instructor to take the practical test for sport pilot instructor and still receive credit for his ultralight instructing experience

January 31, 2008

Ultralight two-seat training exemption expires

September 1, 2009

Last day to be able to use an ultralight converted to an experimental LSA as a sport pilot trainer for compensation

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