

Sport Pilot Licence (SPL) — Syllabus Guide

FAA · EASA · CAAC | Hong Kong Macau General Aviation — Flight Training | October 2026

About the SPL

The three major aviation authorities each use "SPL" differently. The **FAA Sport Pilot Certificate** and the **CAAC Sport Pilot Licence (■■■■■■■■)** are light-sport-aircraft pilot licences. The **EASA SPL** is officially the **Sailplane Pilot Licence** (Part-SFCL, Regulation (EU) 2018/1976 Annex III) — EASA does not operate a light-sport-aeroplane licence; its closest aeroplane equivalents are the LAPL(A)/PPL(A). This guide sets out all three syllabi side by side.

1. Licence overview — side-by-side

Item	FAA Sport Pilot	EASA SPL (Sailplane)	CAAC Sport Pilot ■■■■■■■■
Regulation basis	14 CFR Part 61, Subpart J (incl. Amdt. 61-159, Jul 2025)	Reg. (EU) 2018/1976 Annex III, Part-SFCL (incl. Reg. 2020/358)	CCAR-61 §61.113–61.119; CAAC sport pilot guidance ■■■■■■■■■■■■
Minimum age	17 (16 glider/balloon)	16 (student solo from 14)	17 (16 glider/free balloon)
Medical	US driver's licence or FAA 3rd-class medical	Part-MED medical (sailplane) or national medical declaration	CAAC Class II medical certificate or valid C1 driving licence
Ground training	Instructor / home study on the 61.309 knowledge areas	9 examination subjects (SFCL.135), 75% pass per subject	Instructor-delivered theory course (incl. ~20 h aviation theory); instructor sign-off
Written exam	FAA knowledge test	Theoretical knowledge examination, all 9 subjects within 18 months	No separate CAAC written exam — instructor certifies knowledge (§61.115)
Practical exam	Practical test (checkride) on the 61.311 areas of operation	Skill test with an examiner (FE(S))	No separate CAAC checkride — instructor certifies skill (§61.117); CAAC issues on review
Minimum flight time	Airplane: 20 h (15 dual + 5 solo). Helicopter: 30 h	15 h flight instruction (10 h dual + 2 h supervised solo) + 45 launches	30 h powered-aircraft experience (15 h dual + 5 h solo) ■■■■
Aircraft flown	Light-sport aircraft: max 600 kg / 1,320 lb, 2 seats, 120 kt CAS, day VFR	Sailplanes and touring motor gliders (TMG)	Light sport airplanes ■■■■: single piston, ≤1,200 kg MTOW, ≤4 seats (e.g. C172, DA40)
Privileges / limits	Day VFR, no compensation; endorsements for Class B/C/D, night, retractable/variable prop	PIC in sailplanes, non-commercial; passengers after 10 h / 30 launches + training flight	Recreation + non-revenue flying; 65 h total unlocks paid ■■ operations; 150 h opens the "15+1" instructor route



2. FAA Sport Pilot Certificate — syllabus (14 CFR 61.309 / 61.311 / 61.313)

2a. Aeronautical knowledge areas (61.309):

§	Knowledge area
(a)	Applicable regulations on sport pilot privileges, limits and flight operations
(b)	NTSB accident reporting requirements
(c)	Use of the Aeronautical Information Manual and FAA advisory circulars
(d)	Aeronautical charts for VFR navigation — pilotage, dead reckoning, navigation systems
(e)	Critical weather recognition (ground and in flight), windshear avoidance, weather reports and forecasts
(f)	Safe, efficient aircraft operation — collision avoidance, wake turbulence recognition and avoidance
(g)	Effects of density altitude on takeoff and climb performance
(h)	Weight and balance computations
(i)	Principles of aerodynamics, powerplants and aircraft systems
(j)	Stall awareness, spin entry, spins and spin recovery (as applicable)
(k)	Aeronautical decision making (ADM) and risk management
(l)	Preflight actions — runway lengths, takeoff/landing data, weather, fuel requirements; alternate/delay planning

2b. Flight proficiency — areas of operation (61.311):

Areas of operation		
(a) Preflight preparation	(b) Preflight procedures	(c) Airport/heliport/seaplane base/gliderport ops
(d) Hovering maneuvers (helicopter only)	(e) Takeoffs (launches), landings, go-arounds	(f) Performance maneuvers (gliders: perf. speeds)
(g) Ground reference maneuvers (not glider/heli/balloon)	(h) Soaring techniques (glider only)	(i) Navigation
(j) Slow flight (not LTA/heli/PPC)	(k) Stalls (not LTA/gyro/heli/PPC)	(l) Emergency operations
(m) Post-flight procedures		

2c. Minimum aeronautical experience (61.313, airplane single-engine land/sea):

Requirement	Detail
Total flight time	20 h, incl. ≥ 15 h dual instruction + ≥ 5 h solo flight training
Cross-country	2 h dual cross-country flight training
Landings	10 takeoffs and full-stop landings, each involving a flight in the traffic pattern
Solo cross-country	One flight ≥ 75 NM total distance, full-stop landing at minimum 2 points, one leg ≥ 25 NM straight-line
Test prep	2 h dual on the 61.311 areas within 2 calendar months before the practical test
Device credit	Up to 2.5 h in a qualified flight simulation / aviation training device
Other categories	Glider 10 h (or 3 h with 20 h heavier-than-air time); gyroplane & weight-shift 20 h; powered parachute 12 h; balloon 7 h; helicopter (added Jul 2025) 30 h



3. EASA SPL — Sailplane Pilot Licence syllabus (Part-SFCL)

3a. Theoretical knowledge examination (SFCL.135) — 75% pass per subject; all subjects within 18 months; pass valid 36 months:

Block	Subjects
Common subjects	Air law · Human performance · Meteorology · Communications
Sailplane-specific subjects	Principles of flight · Operational procedures · Flight performance and planning · Aircraft general knowledge (sailplanes) · Navigation
Crediting (SFCL.140)	Holders of Part-FCL / Part-BFCL licences are fully credited on the common subjects

3b. Flight training and experience (SFCL.130):

Element	Requirement
Total flight instruction	≥ 15 h in sailplanes, incl. ≥ 10 h dual + 2 h supervised solo + 45 launches/takeoffs/landings
Sailplane (non-TMG) track	≥ 7 h incl. 3 h dual; cross-country: 1 solo ≥ 50 km (27 NM) or 1 dual ≥ 100 km (55 NM)
TMG track	≥ 6 h incl. 4 h dual; solo cross-country ≥ 150 km (80 NM) with full-stop landing at a different aerodrome
Credit for other licences	10% of PIC time on other aircraft categories, max 7 h (excl. solo & cross-country items, max 10 launches credit)
Launching methods (SFCL.155)	Winch/car launch: 10 dual + 5 solo supervised launches · aerotow/self-launch: 5 dual + 5 solo · bungee: 3 launches
Skill test (SFCL.145)	With an FE(S); sections represent all flight phases; failing one section = repeat that section only
TMG extension (SFCL.150)	Additional skill test + knowledge demonstration: principles of flight, operational procedures, performance/planning, aircraft general knowledge, navigation
Recency (SFCL.160)	24 months: 5 h PIC + 15 launches + 2 training flights (or proficiency check); passengers: 3 launches in preceding 90 days

3c. Additional privileges after the SPL:

Privilege	Path
Aerobatics (SFCL.200)	Basic (loops, wingover, lazy eight, spins, 45° lines) after 30 h / 120 launches PIC; advanced after further 5 h / 20 flights of instruction
Cloud flying (SFCL.215)	30 h PIC post-licence + theory + 2 h instrument dual (engine stopped)
TMG night rating (SFCL.210)	5 h night incl. 3 h dual, 5 solo takeoffs/landings, 1 h cross-country ≥ 50 km
Banner towing (SFCL.205)	100 h / 200 landings PIC on TMG + 10 tow flights (5 dual)

4. CAAC Sport Pilot Licence ■■■■■■ — syllabus (CCAR-61)

4a. Eligibility (§61.113):

Item	Requirement
Age / record / education	≥ 17 (≥ 16 glider/free balloon); no criminal record within 5 years; junior-high education or above
Language	Correct reading/listening/speaking/writing of Chinese for radiotelephony (otherwise a licence limitation is applied)
Medical	CAAC Class II medical certificate, or a valid C1 driving licence per CAAC sport pilot guidance
Application route & fees	Via the Sports Aviation Administration Centre (■■■■■■■■) with CAAC final review; theory exam ¥70 and practical/voice check ¥350 per attempt where required

4b. Ground theory syllabus (§61.115) — instructor-delivered, signed off by an authorized instructor:

Subject	Content
■■■■ Aviation regulations	CCAR-61 privileges and limits, airspace, general operating rules
■■■■■■ Aircraft general knowledge	Airframe, engine and systems for the ■■■■ class flown
■■■■■■■■ Performance, planning & loading	Performance charts, weight and balance, fuel planning
■■■■■■ Human performance	Human factors, physiology, airmanship
■■■ Meteorology	Weather theory, reports, forecasts, hazard recognition
■■ Navigation	Chart reading, dead reckoning, VFR navigation, radio nav aids
■■■■ Operational procedures	Checklists, traffic pattern, emergencies, airmanship
■■■■ Principles of flight	Aerodynamics and stall/spin awareness for light aircraft
■■■■■ Radiotelephony	Standard phraseology (Chinese/English)

4c. Flight training and experience (§61.117 / §61.119, ■■■■ class):

Element	Requirement
Total experience	≥ 30 h pilot flight time in powered aircraft
Dual instruction ■■	≥ 15 h dual in ■■■■ or aircraft (up to 2 h may be in an approved simulator/trainer)
Solo ■■	≥ 5 h solo in the applicable class
Training phases	Dual phase → solo phase → cross-country ■■ phase → maneuver ■■■■ training (~10 h) → instructor evaluation (~2 h)
Maneuver syllabus	Takeoffs, landings, straight-and-level, climbs/descents, turns, stalls, emergency procedures, traffic pattern, go-around
Certification & limits	The instructor certifies skill in the logbook (§61.117). Holders with a ■■■■■■ (no cross-country) endorsement may not act as PIC on cross-country flights
Progression	65 h total → paid operations ■■■■; 150 h → the "15+1" instructor program; upgrade path toward PPL

Figures current as of October 2026 from the official texts — 14 CFR Part 61 Subpart J (eCFR), Regulation (EU) 2018/1976 Annex III Part-SFCL as amended, and CCAR-61 with CAAC sport-pilot guidance. Applicants should confirm current requirements with the relevant aviation authority before enrolment. Enquiries: info@general-aviation.asia