

Training Requirements and Costs for earning a Private Pilot Certificate, May 2019

It is critical to understand that the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) prescribes the minimum hours of instruction required to earn a Private Pilot Certificate. The **FAA Minimums** are listed below. However, tracking the actual training times of flight students who have successfully completed their Private Pilot training reveals the median time required is generally greater than the FAA minimums. The **Average Student Completion Times** are also listed below and provide a more realistic guide to the Training Requirements and Costs you should anticipate as you pursue your Private Pilot Certificate. (As you read these listings, understand that "Hours" refers to Flight Hours, the time that the airplane engine is running as measured by the Hobbs meter.) **The more frequently you fly, the more rapidly your training will proceed.** You must fly at least once every other week; once per week is preferred. Each training flight will cost approximately \$200.

As explained in the Private Pilot Flight Instruction FAQs, the most efficient training schedule is two flight lessons per week

FAA MINIMUMS REQUIRED FOR PRIVATE PILOT TRAINING

40 HOURS TOTAL FLIGHT TIME,
Consisting of...

20 HOURS DUAL INSTRUCTION,
Flight time with the Instructor in aircraft with the Student

15 HOURS SOLO FLIGHT
Flight time when the Student is the sole occupant of the aircraft

The remaining five hours of flight are discretionary Solo hours

AVERAGE STUDENT COMPLETION TIMES REQUIRED FOR PRIVATE PILOT TRAINING

60 HOURS TOTAL FLIGHT TIME,
Consisting of...

30 HOURS DUAL INSTRUCTION,
Flight time with the Instructor in aircraft with the Student

25 HOURS SOLO FLIGHT
Flight time when the Student is the sole occupant of the aircraft

The remaining five hours of flight are discretionary Solo hours

COSTS:

60 HOURS AIRCRAFT RENTAL
@ \$115/ Hour (includes fuel cost) =
\$6900 Aircraft Rental, Dual & Solo flight

30 HOURS FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR FEE
@ \$45/ Hour =
\$ 1350 Flight Instructor Fee

TOTAL AIRCRAFT RENTAL AND
FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR FEES = **\$8250**

Additional, Non-Flight Required Costs

Student Pilot Certificate/ Third Class Medical Certificate

Two Documents: The first is your “student pilot license.” You apply on-line using the FAA IACRA website. I charge **\$50** to assist you with your application.

The second document is your FAA Third Class Medical Certificate. This certificate is issued by a doctor who is also an AME, Airman’s Medical Examiner. Only AMEs can issue Pilots Medical Certificates and very few doctors are AMEs. Cost is set by the AME, typically **\$100**. (I refer my clients to an AME at Riverside Airport, Tulsa.)

Ground School Study

Ultimately, pilots must pass an FAA Knowledge Exam. There are many ways to prepare for the test. The options are:

1. Weekend “Cram Course” Study in a classroom environment. These classes are typically designed to prepare you to pass the test on Monday. You will not necessarily possess the knowledge required to be a safe Pilot.
2. 10- 12 Week Private Pilot Ground School. Typically, class meets for 3 hours one night/ week. Very thorough; typically, the course is taken concurrently with Flight Training.
3. One-on-One Tutoring with your CFI or a Certified Ground Instructor. Some folks learn best with a mentor.
4. On-line computer- based training (CBT). Currently the most popular type of Ground School. If you can learn using CBT and have the discipline to assign yourself homework- and complete the tasks- this is a very valid means of instruction.
5. Self- study. Simply buy the textbooks and learn the material on your own. If you’re a mental masochist, have at it.

Except for option 5, you should budget approximately **\$450** for Ground School study.

Knowledge Test fee. You will need to go to an authorized FAA Testing Center to take the written exam, the Knowledge Test. Nearest location is Tulsa; cost will be **\$150**.

The Flight Test. The Big Day! During a two-hour flight, you will demonstrate your flight proficiency to an FAA Designated Pilot Examiner (DPE). You will need to fly to Tulsa to take the Flight Test. The DPE will require a \$550 fee for your checkride.

Flight Test Costs: Examiner fee- \$550. Aircraft rental- (1.5 hour to/from Tulsa plus 2- hour checkride with the DPE = 3.5 hour @ \$115/ hour) \$402.50 Checkride Cost:

\$952.50

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Miscellaneous Stuff: FAR/AIM (the regulatory “bible”), E6B computer, plotter, sectionals (maps), logbook, clipboard. Stuff cost: **\$125**

Most likely, you will want to purchase your own headphones. Very good headphones can be had for \$250; high end, noise cancelling headsets up to \$1300

GRAND TOTAL, Boldface costs: \$10,077.50*

*: This is not a guaranteed cost; only an example of the minimum costs required.