



Frequently Asked Questions

What do I have to do BEFORE I can begin my actual flight training in the helicopter?

The seat weight limit is 230 pounds. As long as you weigh less than that.....

NOTHING! There are NO prerequisites. You can begin training in the helicopter TODAY! We offer a special introductory training lesson flights so you can try helicopter flying (hands-on) with no obligation. You can begin at any age when you can reach the flight controls. There is no upper age limit. You must be 16 years old to fly the helicopter solo (by yourself), 17 to get a Private Pilot's license and 18 years old to get a Commercial Pilot's (and Flight Instructor's) license.

How many hours of flight training does it take to get my helicopter license?

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requires a minimum of 40 hours of total flight time in the aircraft, including at least 20 hours of dual instruction (with a Certified Flight Instructor, or "CFI") and 10 hours of solo flight (by yourself, after proper training). Most people take a little longer to learn to control the aircraft well enough to pass the FAA "practical" flight test. The national average is about 50-60 hours. Be very suspicious if any flight school tells you anything different. Note: Pilots with airplane training need 10 fewer hours to obtain an "Add-On" rating. Commercial license requires 150 hours.

How long a period of time will it take to earn my helicopter license?

Well, that depends on you- how hard you study, how much you practice, how often you train. All students are different and some learn faster than others. We recommend you fly at least twice a week. Too much time between lessons can result in the need for more time reviewing or relearning maneuvers before moving on.

After I earn my helicopter license, what kinds of helicopters can I fly?

You can legally fly ANY type of helicopter, including turbine (jet) engine-powered helicopters or multi-engine helicopters up to a gross weight of 12,500 lbs. (Only a few VERY LARGE helicopters weigh more than that limit). The flight controls work the same in EVERY type and size of helicopter. To safely fly a different size or type of helicopter, however, will usually require some additional training in that aircraft. Often insurance companies will require a certain number of hours of experience before you can act as solo Pilot-in-Command of different sizes or types of aircraft.



I've heard I have to take a flight physical. When? And what does that involve?

Yes, but not when you begin dual flight instructions, only before you are trained and ready to fly the helicopter solo. The physical is very quick and easy. It consists of a eye test (like the driver's license test) and a very simple physical exam from an FAA-trained doctor, called an Aviation Medical Examiner (AME). Unlike in the military, there are VERY FEW medical (or eyesight) conditions that will prevent you from getting a civilian pilot's license.

Do I have to take a written FAA pilot test at some time?

Yes, but only before you take the FAA flight test (or "checkride") towards the end of your training program. You can begin training today and learn the material for the written test (called a "knowledge test" as you go along. The more you understand about the helicopter, however, the faster you will master flying the aircraft, so we encourage students to work on studying for the written test as soon as possible.

What kind of flying missions do helicopter pilots perform?

Helicopters do things no other aircraft or vehicle can even think of doing. Jobs for pilots include: Pilot training, law enforcement (DEA, Customs, Border Patrol, Local and State Police), fire fighting, news gathering, military operations, traffic reporting, heavy-lift work, crop spraying, offshore oil rig transport, search-and-rescue, air-ambulance hospital work, sightseeing, aerial photography, and business transportation.

What does it take to become a professional helicopter pilot?

As with any professional lifetime career, it takes time to build enough flight experience to become employable. You first need to earn your Commercial Pilot's license, then you need to "build time" to be employable. The subject is somewhat complicated, so call us to discuss the path to becoming a career helicopter pilot. The future job market is looking very good for helicopter pilots.

Which helicopter will I be flying?

You will be flying the most popular flight training helicopter in the world, the Robinson R-22.

Do I have to be an airplane pilot before I can learn to fly helicopters?

NO, absolutely NOT! There are many helicopter pilots who have never touched the controls in an airplane and have no interest in learning to fly airplanes.