

FAA Requirements to Obtain a Commercial Pilot Certificate (Summary)

1. Be able to read, write, and converse fluently in English
2. Be at least 18 years of age
3. Hold at least a current third-class FAA medical certificate. Later, if your flying requires a commercial pilot certificate, you must hold a second-class medical certificate.
4. Hold an instrument rating. A commercial pilot is presumed to have an instrument rating. If not, his/her commercial pilot certificate will be endorsed with a prohibition against carrying passengers for hire on day VFR flights beyond 50 NM or at night.
5. Receive and log ground training from an authorized instructor or complete a home-study course
6. Pass a knowledge test with a score of 70% or better. The instrument rating knowledge test consists of 100 multiple-choice questions selected from the airplane-related questions in the FAA's commercial pilot test bank.
7. Accumulate appropriate flight experience and instruction (see [FAR 61.129](#)). A total of 250 hours of flight time is required.
8. Successfully complete a practical (flight) test given as a final exam by an FAA inspector or designated pilot examiner and conducted as specified in the FAA's Commercial Pilot Practical Test Standards.

Commercial Pilot Privileges and Limitations

- As a commercial pilot, you may act as pilot in command of an aircraft that is carrying passengers or property for compensation or hire and may be paid to act as pilot in command.

FAA Requirements to Obtain a Commercial Pilot Certificate (Detailed Version)

1. Be at least 18 years of age and hold at least a Private Pilot Certificate.
2. Be able to read, speak, write, and understand the English language.
3. Hold at least a current third-class FAA medical certificate.
 - a. You must undergo a routine medical examination which may be administered only by an FAA-designated doctor called an Aviation Medical Examiner (AME)
 - b. Even if you have a physical handicap, medical certificates can be issued in many cases. Operating limitation may be imposed depending on the nature of the disability.
 - c. Your FAA-Certificated Flight Instructor (CFI) or Fixed-Base Operator (FBO) will be able to recommend an AME. [NOTE: An FBO is an airport business that gives flight lessons, sells aviation fuel, repairs airplanes, etc.]
4. Receive and log ground training from an authorized instructor or complete either an online study course or home-study course to learn the following:
 - a. Applicable Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs) that relate to commercial pilot privileges, limitations, and flight operations
 - b. Accident reporting requirements of the National Transportation Safety Board
 - c. Basic aerodynamics and principles of flight

- d. Meteorology to include recognition of critical weather situations, windshear recognition and avoidance, and the use of automated weather reports and forecasts
 - e. Safe and efficient operation of the aircraft
 - f. Weight and balance computations
 - g. Use of performance charts
 - h. Significance and effects of exceeding aircraft performance limitations
 - i. Use of aeronautical charts and a magnetic compass for pilotage and dead reckoning
 - j. Use of air navigation facilities
 - k. Aeronautical decision making and judgment
 - l. Principles and functions of aircraft systems
 - m. Maneuvers, procedures, and emergency operations appropriate to the aircraft
 - n. Night and high-altitude operations
 - o. Procedures for operating in the National Airspace System (NAS)
5. Pass a pilot knowledge test, at an FAA-designated computer testing center, with a score of 70% or better. The commercial pilot test consists of 100 multiple-choice questions selected from the airplane-related questions in the FAA's instrument rating test bank.
6. Accumulate appropriate flight experience (FAR 61.129)
- a. 100 hours in powered aircraft, of which 50 hours must be in airplanes
 - b. 100 hours as Pilot-In-Command (PIC) flight time, which includes at least:
 - i. 50 hours in airplanes
 - ii. 50 hours in cross-country flight of which at least 10 ours must be in airplanes
 - c. 20 hours of training in the areas of operation required for single-engine or multi-engine rating that includes at least:
 - i. 10 hours of instrument training of which at least 5 hours must be in single-engine or multi-engine airplane, as appropriate
 - ii. 10 hours of training in an airplane that has a retractable landing gear, flaps, and controllable-pitch propeller, or that is turbine-powered
 - iii. One cross-country flight of at least 2 hours in a single-engine or multi-engine airplane (as appropriate) in day-VRF condition, consisting of a total straight-line distance of more than 100nm from the original point of departure
 - iv. One cross-country flight of at least 2 hours in a single-engine or multi-engine airplane (as appropriate) in night-VRF condition, consisting of a total straight-line distance of more than 100nm from the original point of departure
 - v. 3 hours in a single-engine or multi-engine airplane (as appropriate) in preparation for the practical test within the 60 days preceding the test
 - d. 10 hours of solo flight (sole occupant of the airplane) in a single-engine airplane, or 10 hours of flight time performing the duties of Pilot-In-Command (PIC) in a multi-engine airplane with an authorized instructor, training in the areas of operations

required for the single-engine or multi-engine rating (as appropriate), which includes at least:

- i. One cross-country flight of not less than 300nm total distance, with landings at a minimum of three points, one of which is a straight-line distance of at least 250nm from the original departure point
 - ii. 5 hours in night-VFR conditions with 10 takeoffs and landings (with each landing involving a flight in the traffic pattern) at an airport with an operating control tower
 - e. The 250 hours of flight time as a pilot may include 50 hours in an approved flight simulator or training device that is representative of the single-engine or multi-engine airplane (as appropriate)
7. Hold an instrument rating.
 8. Demonstrate flight proficiency (FAR 61.127). Receive and log ground and flight training from an authorized instructor in the following areas of operations for an airplane category rating with a single-engine or multi-engine class rating:
 - a. Preflight preparation
 - b. Preflight procedures
 - c. Airport operations
 - d. Takeoffs, landings, and go-arounds
 - e. Performance maneuvers
 - f. Ground reference maneuvers
 - g. Navigation
 - h. Slow flight and (aerodynamic) stalls
 - i. Emergency operations
 - j. High-altitude operations
 - k. Post-flight procedures

Successful complete a practical (flight) test given as a final exam by an FAA inspector or Designated Pilot Examiner (DPE); conducted as specified in the most current version of the FAA's Commercial Pilot Practical Test Standards (PTS).