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Federal Aviation Regulations Part 61
Subpart H—Flight Instructors

§ 61.181 Applicability.

This subpart prescribes the requirements for the issuance of flight instructor certificates and ratings, the conditions under which those certificates and ratings are necessary, and the limitations on those certificates and ratings.

§ 61.183 Eligibility requirements.

To be eligible for a commercial pilot certificate, a person must:

- (a) Be at least 18 years of age;
- (b) Be able to read, speak, write, and understand the English language. If the applicant is unable to meet one of these requirements due to medical reasons, then the Administrator may place such operating limitations on that applicant's flight instructor certificate as are necessary;
- (c) Hold either a commercial pilot certificate or airline transport pilot certificate with:
 - (1) An aircraft category and class rating that is appropriate to the flight instructor rating sought; and
 - (2) An instrument rating, if the person holds a commercial pilot certificate that is appropriate to the flight instructor rating sought, if applying for—
 - (i) A flight instructor certificate with an airplane category and single-engine class rating;
 - (ii) A flight instructor certificate with an airplane category and multiengine class rating;
 - (iii) A flight instructor certificate with a powered-lift rating; or
 - (iv) A flight instructor certificate with an instrument rating.
- (d) Receive a logbook endorsement from an authorized instructor on the fundamentals of instructing listed in Sec. 61.185 of this part appropriate to the required knowledge test;
- (e) Pass a knowledge test on the areas listed in Sec. 61.185(a) of this part, unless the applicant:
 - (1) Holds a flight instructor certificate or ground instructor certificate issued under this part;
 - (2) Holds a current teacher's certificate issued by a State, county, city, or municipality that authorizes the person to teach at an educational level of the 7th grade or higher; or
 - (3) Is employed as a teacher at an accredited college or university.
- (f) Pass a knowledge test on the aeronautical knowledge areas listed in Sec. 61.185(a)(2) and (a)(3) of this part that are appropriate to the flight instructor rating sought;
- (g) Receive a logbook endorsement from an authorized instructor on the areas of operation listed in Sec. 61.187(b) of this part, appropriate to the flight instructor rating sought;
- (h) Pass the required practical test that is appropriate to the flight instructor rating sought in an:
 - (1) Aircraft that is representative of the category and class of aircraft for the aircraft rating sought; or
 - (2) Approved flight simulator or approved flight training device that is representative of the category and class of aircraft for the rating sought, and used in accordance with an approved course at a training center certificated under part 142 of this chapter.
- (j) Log at least 15 hours as pilot in command in the category and class of aircraft that is appropriate to the flight instructor rating sought; and
- (k) Comply with the appropriate sections of this part that apply to the flight instructor rating sought.

§ 61.185 Aeronautical knowledge.

(a) A person who is applying for a flight instructor certificate must receive and log ground training from an authorized instructor on:

- (1) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, the fundamentals of instructing, including:
 - (i) The learning process;
 - (ii) Elements of effective teaching;
 - (iii) Student evaluation and testing;
 - (iv) Course development;
 - (v) Lesson planning; and
 - (vi) Classroom training techniques.

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(2) The aeronautical knowledge areas for a recreational, private, and commercial pilot certificate applicable to the aircraft category for which flight instructor privileges are sought; and

(3) The aeronautical knowledge areas for the instrument rating applicable to the category for which instrument flight instructor privileges are sought.

(b) The following applicants do not need to comply with paragraph (a) of this section:

- (1) The holder of a flight instructor certificate or ground instructor certificate issued under this part;
- (2) The holder of a current teacher's certificate issued by a State, county, city, or municipality that authorizes the person to teach at an educational level of the 7th grade or higher; or
- (3) A person employed as a teacher at an accredited college or university.

§ 61.187 Flight proficiency.

(a) *General.* A person who is applying for a flight instructor certificate must receive and log flight and ground training from an authorized instructor on the areas of operation listed in this section that apply to the flight instructor rating sought. The applicant's logbook must contain an endorsement from an authorized instructor certifying that the person is proficient to pass a practical test on those areas of operation.

(b) *Areas of operation.*

(3) For a rotorcraft category rating with a helicopter class rating:

- (i) Fundamentals of instructing;
- (ii) Technical subject areas;
- (iii) Preflight preparation;
- (iv) Preflight lesson on a maneuver to be performed in flight;
- (v) Preflight procedures;
- (vi) Airport operations;
- (vii) Takeoffs, landings, and go-arounds;
- (viii) Fundamentals of flight;
- (ix) Performance maneuvers;
- (x) Flight at slow airspeeds;
- (xi) Ground reference maneuvers;
- (xii) Emergency operations; and
- (xiii) Postflight procedures.

(7) For an instrument rating with the appropriate aircraft category and class rating:

- (i) Fundamentals of instructing;
- (ii) Technical subject areas;
- (iii) Preflight preparation;
- (iv) Preflight lesson on a maneuver to be performed in flight;
- (v) Air traffic control clearances and procedures;
- (vi) Flight by reference to instruments;
- (vii) Navigation aids;
- (viii) Instrument approach procedures;
- (ix) Emergency operations; and
- (x) Postflight procedures.

(c) The flight training required by this section may be accomplished:

- (1) In an aircraft that is representative of the category and class of aircraft for the rating sought; or
- (2) In an approved flight simulator or approved flight training device representative of the category and class of aircraft for the rating sought, and used in accordance with an approved course at a training center certificated under part 142 of this chapter.

§ 61.129 Aeronautical experience.

(c) *For a helicopter rating.* Except as provided for in paragraph (i) of this section, a person who applies for a commercial pilot certificate with a rotorcraft category and helicopter class rating must log at least 150 hours of flight time as a pilot that consists of at least:

- (1) 100 hours in powered aircraft, of which 50 hours must be in helicopters.
- (2) 100 hours of pilot in command flight time, which includes at least—
 - (i) 35 hours in helicopters; and

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- (ii) 10 hours in cross-country flight in helicopters.
- (3) 20 hours of training on the areas of operation listed in Sec. 61.127(b)(3) of this part that includes at least—
 - (i) 10 hours of instrument training in an aircraft;
 - (ii) One cross-country flight of at least 2 hours in a helicopter in day VFR conditions, consisting of a total straight-line distance of more than 50 nautical miles from the original point of departure;
 - (iii) One cross-country flight of at least 2 hours in a helicopter in night VFR conditions, consisting of a total straight-line distance of more than 50 nautical miles from the original point of departure; and
 - (iv) 3 hours in a helicopter in preparation for the practical test within the 60-day period preceding the date of the test.
- (4) 10 hours of solo flight in a helicopter on the areas of operation listed in Sec. 61.127(b)(3) of this part, which includes at least—
 - (i) One cross-country flight with landings at a minimum of three points, with one segment consisting of a straight-line distance of at least 50 nautical miles from the original point of departure; and
 - (ii) 5 hours in night VFR conditions with 10 takeoffs and 10 landings (with each landing involving a flight in the traffic pattern).