Your flight training checklist

A practical guide to your student pilot certificate and FAA medical. Print it, check off each step, and bring your questions to your instructor.

> **You can start with a lesson.**
>
> Your first dual flight lesson with an instructor requires **neither a student pilot certificate nor an FAA medical certificate**, with your instructor acting as pilot in command. These steps prepare you for solo flight.

01 Apply for your student pilot certificate

For airplane applicants: be at least **16** and able to read, speak, and understand English. You may begin dual lessons earlier. The student certificate and medical are separate documents.

- ☐ **Create an IACRA account** at iacra.faa.gov. Register as an Applicant, use your legal identity details, and save your FAA Tracking Number (FTN) and login securely.
- ☐ **Start a Student Pilot application** in IACRA. Review your name, date of birth, and mailing address with your instructor before signing.
- ☐ **Meet with your instructor or another authorized certifying official.** Bring government-issued photo ID for identity and eligibility verification; complete the required electronic signatures together.
- ☐ **Confirm issuance before solo.** Follow the application in IACRA and obtain your issued student certificate (temporary, if available, or permanent). Submitting an application alone does not authorize solo flight.

02 Choose an FAA medical class

Class	Typical airplane flying privileges	Duration*
Third	Student solo / private pilot	Under 40: 60 months 40 or older: 24 months
Second	Commercial pilot privileges	12 months, any age
First	Airline transport pilot in command; certain other airline crew roles	Under 40: 12 months 40 or older: 6 months

*Age at examination; calendar months after the exam month, for the privileges listed. A First- or Second-Class certificate may remain usable for lower privileges after its higher-privilege period ends. Special limitations may shorten validity.

Career-minded? Sevin Aviation recommends exploring a **First-Class medical early** before investing heavily in training. It is **not required to begin private pilot training** and does not guarantee future medical eligibility.

From application to solo

Use this page to prepare for your medical appointment and review your next steps with your instructor.

03 Complete MedXPress and visit an AME

- ☐ **Find an FAA Aviation Medical Examiner (AME).** Use designee.faa.gov and confirm the office performs your selected medical class. First-Class exams require an appropriately designated AME.
- ☐ **Ask about medical history and records.** If you have questions about a condition or medication, arrange an AME consultation before the formal application or exam.
- ☐ **Complete FAA Form 8500-8 in MedXPress** at medxpress.faa.gov. Answer fully and accurately. Save the submitted application and its confirmation number.
- ☐ **Attend the AME exam within 60 days of submission.** Bring your confirmation number, government-issued photo ID, medications list, and requested medical records.
- ☐ **Confirm the outcome and any limitations.** The AME may issue a certificate, defer it to the FAA, or deny it. If more information is requested, follow the AME/FAA instructions. Submission or examination alone is not approval.

Two different systems. Two different purposes.

IACRA handles your pilot certificate application and FTN.
MedXPress handles your medical application and confirmation number.
Applying in one system does not complete the other process.

04 Before your first solo flight

- ☐ **Review the plan with your instructor.** For the traditional airplane private pilot path, have your issued student pilot certificate and at least a valid Third-Class medical.
- ☐ **Complete required pre-solo training, knowledge assessment, and instructor endorsements.** Your instructor must determine that you are ready and authorize solo flight.
- ☐ **Check documents and limitations.** Carry your required pilot certificate, medical, and photo ID; review applicable endorsements and operating limits with your instructor.

Other medical pathways: BasicMed and certain sport pilot operations have different eligibility rules and limits. BasicMed generally requires a prior FAA medical issued after July 14, 2006. Ask your instructor and AME which pathway applies.

Official FAA tools & references

IACRA / student certificate: iacra.faa.gov
MedXPress / medical application: medxpress.faa.gov
Find an AME / Designee Locator: designee.faa.gov
Student certificate guidance: faa.gov/pilots/become/student_cert
Medical exam process: faa.gov/pilots/medical_certification/get
Medical rules & duration: 14 CFR 61.23 (eCFR)

Scope: beginning airplane training toward a private pilot certificate. Requirements checked November 10, 2026. Use current FAA rules and your instructor/AME guidance for your situation.