

FROM SOLO TO LICENSE

Congratulations! You have joined the exclusive society of those who know and love soaring! Your training however is not over. In fact, you will find you will learn something on nearly every flight you take in your entire soaring career.

First of all, if you are an SSA member, you have earned your A badge by soloing. You should plan on working towards your B, C and Bronze badges as your skills and knowledge improve and increase. Please see your instructor for details.

If you already haven't done so, you should pick up After Solo and complete this fine work to complement First Flight to Solo, and the Soaring Flight Manual.

Also, please don't forget that as a soloed student you are subject to an endorsement program from your instructor. Your initial solo privileges may be one flight, 5 flights, 30 days and eventually 90 days (maximum). This means that at the expiration of these designated periods, you must conduct a flight review with your instructor. You should plan on flying occasionally with an instructor to hone your skills and work on your badges outside of this program as well.

When you feel you're ready, you should start studying for the FAA written exam. This will be a 60 question multiple choice test administered on a computer. You must score 70% or higher to pass. There are several self study tools available, from books containing the question and answer pool to computer based training which emulates the actual exam itself. There is even a free website to practice taking the test. Please discuss with your instructor the method which may be best for you.

Before scheduling your exam at one of the designated FAA testing sites, you must obtain an endorsement for Aeronautical Knowledge from your instructor. Take this along with photo ID to the testing center (along with appropriate fee), and you're on your way. Make sure you don't lose the results report! Bring the results in so your instructor can log it in his logbook, and discuss any questions you may have missed.

Now the real fun of preparing for your Private Pilot-Glider license begins. There are two parts to the actual examination with an FAA Designee. These parts consist of an oral exam and a practical flight test. These are described in detail in the **Private Pilot Practical Test Standards (PTS) for Gliders**, a publication of the FAA which is available here in the clubhouse or by download from the SSA website. It is also available for download on the LESC Instructors web page. You should understand and know it well. A good book to pick up is Bob Wanders "Private Pilot Check ride Made Easy" available from the SSA.

The PTS describes in detail the items which will be covered in the oral exam as well as the practical test. You should be prepared to spend 3-4 hours in the oral exam, followed by 2-3 flights with the Designee. During the first part of the oral, you will be given three tasks to complete which are weight and balance calculation, a cross country profile and obtaining winds and temps aloft to complete an adiabatic chart. You will then be asked several questions to test your knowledge as dictated by the PTS.

The practical test will consist of a flight routine which your instructor will introduce to you, which you should practice for several weeks. Your instructor will then sign your endorsement when he feels you are ready and help you schedule time with a Designee. You can either have the Designee come to Skylark (recommended as you are familiar with your home field), go to Hemet, Warner Springs or any other glider port where a Designee is available.

Seems like a lot of effort doesn't it? It's actually pretty easy when you take it one step at a time. Once you've completed your license then you'll be able to introduce others to the exhilaration of soaring!