

Twelve Months and Counting

by Jim Sweeney

It's a new year and the countdown has begun. Twelve months and counting. January, 2007 is the deadline. Ultralight pilots wishing to take full advantage of the transition to sport pilot need to take heed.

Why are the next twelve months so important?

January 31, 2007 is the last day for ultralight pilots, who were registered with one of the three ultralight organizations (USUA, EAA, ASC) on or before September 1, 2004, to *complete* the pilot transition to sport pilot and take full advantage of their ultralight flying time and experience allowed by the sport pilot rule.

The bottom line is that an ultralight pilot taking advantage of the transition (the 'grandfather clause' outlined in 14CFR 61.329) will save money in obtaining his sport pilot certificate, and more than just a few dollars. If you plan to become a sport pilot, *complete* the transition before the end of January, 2007 and save yourself money by taking advantage of your

ultralight flying time and experience.

There are two steps that have to be completed prior to the January deadline - pass the sport pilot knowledge test and pass the sport pilot practical test. Both have already been taken and completed successfully by many ultralight pilots.

The Knowledge Test

The sport pilot knowledge test is a 40 question, multiple choice test that can be taken at airports and other FAA testing centers. Two hours are allowed and is plenty of time for successful completion. The knowledge test is not aircraft specific and the same test is used for fixed wing, weight shift, powered parachute and other pilot applicants. A passing grade is 70%. The minimum age for taking the test is 15.

Study materials, test preps and practice tests are available in textbook, interactive internet and DVD formats and live ground schools. Ultralight experience and knowledge of Part 103 is the



61 309 What aeronautical knowledge must I have to apply for a sport pilot certificate?

§61.309 What aeronautical knowledge must I have to apply for a sport pilot certificate?

Except as specified in §61.329, to apply for a sport pilot certificate you must receive and log ground training from an authorized instructor or complete a home-study course on the following aeronautical knowledge areas:

- (a) Applicable regulations of this chapter that relate to sport pilot privileges, limits, and flight operations.
- (b) Accident reporting requirements of the National Transportation Safety Board.
- (c) Use of the applicable portions of the aeronautical information manual and FAA advisory circulars.
- (d) Use of aeronautical charts for VFR navigation using pilotage, dead reckoning, and navigation systems, as appropriate.
- (e) Recognition of critical weather situations from the ground and in flight, windshear avoidance, and the procurement and use of aeronautical weather reports and forecasts.
- (f) Safe and efficient operation of aircraft, including collision avoidance, and recognition and avoidance of wake turbulence.
- (g) Effects of density altitude on takeoff and climb performance.
- (h) Weight and balance computations.
- (i) Principles of aerodynamics, powerplants, and aircraft systems.
- (j) Stall awareness, spin entry, spins, and spin recovery techniques, as applicable.
- (k) Aeronautical decision making and risk management.
- (l) Preflight actions that include—
 - (1) How to get information on runway lengths at airports of intended use, data on takeoff and landing distances, weather reports and forecasts, and fuel requirements; and
 - (2) How to plan for alternatives if the planned flight cannot be completed or if you encounter delays.

starting place for the knowledge test preparation. Whether you select home study or a classroom setting, start the process. The topics covered will make you a more knowledgeable and safer pilot.

A recommendation is required to take the sport pilot knowledge test. This recommendation can be obtained from your ultralight organization. The ultralight organization will send you a letter stating that you were an ultralight pilot and member of the organization prior to September, 2004. The testing facility will accept this letter as your recommendation to take the knowledge test. Depending on the ultralight organization, you can request your recommendation letter via letter, e-mail or phone call. There is no fee for this letter of recommendation from most ultralight organizations.

An ultralight pilot can also receive a recommendation to take the sport pilot knowledge test from a Sport Pilot Instructor, Certified Flight Instructor (CFI), or Ground Instructor. There may be a fee for this type of recommendation to cover the instructor's time.

There is a charge at the testing center to take the test and an appointment may be required. A list of FAA testing centers by state is available, as

a .pdf document, at http://www.faa.gov/education_research/testing/airmen/media/test_centers.pdf

The Practical Test

The second step is the practical test. This is where you discuss your knowledge of flying and regulations (the oral portion) and fly (the flight portion) with the FAA or a Designated Pilot Examiner (DPE).


The key to the practical test is the Practical Test Standard (PTS). This booklet outlines what should be known and is tested for in the practical test (oral & flight portions). The PTS sets the minimum level of acceptable performance and serves as an outline and guide for the DPE.

Flight instructors teach students to exceed the minimum levels described in the PTS. Applicants should be able to perform at or above the PTS limits in all required tasks. DPEs use the PTS limits as the minimum level of acceptance. Fear of the unknown is taken out of the practical test by reading and understanding the requirements in the PTS.

Questions specific to the category of aircraft (airplane, weight shift, powered parachute and others) used by the applicant will be asked by the

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61.305 Age and Language requirements for a sport pilot certificate

§61.305 What are the age and language requirements for a sport pilot certificate?

(a) To be eligible for a sport pilot certificate you must:

(1) Be at least 17 years old (or 16 years old if you are applying to operate a glider or balloon).

(2) Be able to read, speak, write, and understand English. If you cannot read, speak, write, and understand English because of medical reasons, the FAA may place limits on your certificate as are necessary for the safe operation of light-sport aircraft.

Looking Up FARs

This article refers to several different regulations. For example, 14CFR 61.329. This means that this particular regulation is found under Title **14** (Aeronautics and Space) of the **Code of Federal Regulations**. In that title, this regulation is in Part **61** – Certification: Pilots, Flight Instructors, and Ground Instructors, in section **329**. You may also see the regulations contained in Title 14 referred to as FARs – Federal Air Regulations. Other Parts often cited are Part 103 - Ultralight Vehicles, and Part 91- General Operating and Flight Rules.

If you don't have a print copy of the FARs yet, you can browse the Code of Federal Regulations online at <http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/>. All the regulations you will need to know are contained in the FAR/AIM (Federal Air Regulations/Aeronautical Information Manual), published by the government and several aviation supply companies.

DPE during the practical test. The oral and flight portions of the test are based on the aircraft to be used. Each category of aircraft has its own PTS. Purchase a copy, it is a good investment.

Three hours of instruction in preparation for the practical test and a recommendation is required for the practical test. An ultralight pilot can use the letter he received from his ultralight organization for the knowledge test recommendation in lieu of the three hours and as a recommendation to take the practical test.

The three hours of instruction in preparation and the recommendation can be given by a Sport Pilot Instructor or a CFI rated in the aircraft category that will be used for the test. There will likely be a fee for the instruction and recommendation to cover the instructor's time and expenses.

An applicant for sport pilot must show, in a

logbook, that he meets the aeronautical experience requirements of 14CFR61.313. This includes minimum flying time, takeoffs & landings, cross country flying and flight training outlined in 14CFR61.311. However, an ultralight pilot with a letter from his ultralight organization does not have to show the aeronautical experience required in 14CFR61.313. As a registered ultralight pilot the experience level is verified by the letter from the ultralight organization.

An outline of special provisions for obtaining a sport pilot certificate for persons who are registered ultralight pilots with an FAA-recognized ultralight organization is contained in 14CFR61.329. This is good reading and summarizes all the above.

There is considerable savings by not having

- An instructor recommend you for the



61.329 Special Provisions for obtaining a Sport Pilot Certificate

§61.329 Are there special provisions for obtaining a sport pilot certificate for persons who are registered ultralight pilots with an FAA-recognized ultralight organization?

(a) If you are a registered ultralight pilot with an FAA-recognized ultralight organization use the following table to determine how to obtain a sport pilot certificate.

If you are...	Then you must...
1) A registered ultralight pilot with an FAA-recognized ultralight organization on or before September 1, 2004, and you want to apply for a sport pilot certificate (i) Not later than January 31, 2007	(i) Not later than January 31, 2007 (A) Meet the eligibility §§ 61.305 and 61.23, but not the aeronautical knowledge requirements specified in § 61.309, the flight proficiency requirements specified in § 61.311, and the aeronautical experience requirements specified in § 61.313,
	(B) Pass the knowledge test for a sport pilot certificate specified in § 61.307 or the knowledge test for a flight instructor certificate with a sport pilot rating specified in § 61.405,
	(C) Pass the practical test for a sport pilot certificate specified in § 61.307,
	(D) Provide the FAA with a certified copy of your ultralight pilot records from an FAA-recognized ultralight organization, and those records must
	(1) Document that you are a registered ultralight pilot with that FAA-recognized ultralight organization, and
	(2) Indicate that you are recognized to operate each category and class of aircraft for which you seek sport pilot privileges.
(2) A registered ultralight pilot with an FAA-recognized ultralight organization after September 1, 2004, and you want to apply for a sport pilot certificate	(i) Meet the eligibility requirements in §§ 61.305 and 61.23,
	(ii) Meet the aeronautical knowledge requirements specified in § 61.309, the flight proficiency requirements specified in § 61.311, and aeronautical experience requirements specified in § 61.313; however, you may credit your ultralight aeronautical experience in accordance with §61.52 toward the requirements in §§ 61.309, 61.311, and 61.313,
	(iii) Pass the knowledge and practical tests for a sport pilot certificate specified in § 61.307, and
	(iv) Provide the FAA with a certified copy of your ultralight pilot records from an FAA-recognized ultralight organization, and those records must
	(A) Document that you are a registered ultralight pilot with that FAA-recognized ultralight organization, and
	(B) Indicate that you are recognized to operate the category and class of aircraft for which you seek sport pilot privileges.

(b) When you successfully pass the practical test for a sport pilot certificate, the FAA will issue you a sport pilot certificate without any category and class ratings. The FAA will provide you with a logbook endorsement for the category, class, and make and model of aircraft in which you have successfully passed the practical test and for which you are authorized to act as pilot in command. If you meet the provisions of paragraph (a)(1) of this section, the FAA will provide you with a logbook endorsement for each category, class, and make and model of aircraft listed on the ultralight pilot records you provide to the FAA.

knowledge test

- An instructor give you three hours of training in preparation for the practical test
- An instructor recommend you for the practical test
- To show aeronautical experience required by 14CFR61.313 in a logbook.

This is the benefit of transition from ultralight pilot to sport pilot or what has been referred to as the grandfather clause (14CFR61.329).

Bottom line suggestions:

- Study for and take the sport pilot knowledge test
- Get a copy of the FAR/AIM and review 14CFR61.329
- Review the PTS for the category aircraft you plan to use in the practical test
- Complete the practical test prior to January 31, 2007
- Do not wait till the end of 2006 to start – you may not be able to get an appointment for the test.

- Beat the deadline and save some money
- Remember – January 31,2007

Twelve months and counting

For more information check the website of your ultralight organization or the following links:

United States Ultralight Association (USUA)
www.usua.org

North American Powered Parachute Federation (NAPPF) – www.nappf.com

SweeneyCorp
www.sweeneycorp.com
 FAA Sport pilot Office (afs610)
www.faa.gov/licenses_certificates/airmen_certification/sport_pilot/

Jim Sweeney is an Ultralight Instructor and Advanced Ground Instructor, and flies both powered parachutes and fixed wing ultralights in addition to GA aircraft. He is president of NAPPF and serves on the board of directors of USUA. He is a frequent guest on UltraFlight Radio.



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