



HOW TO BE A PILOT

Contents

Introduction.....	3	Aircraft type ratings	8
Fit and proper person.....	4	Ratings.....	8
English language proficiency	4	Becoming a commercial pilot.....	9
Obtaining your private pilot license	5	Medical.....	10
Medical.....	5	Flying.....	10
Flying lessons.....	6	Examinations.....	11
PPL examinations	7	CPL issuance.....	11
License issuance	7	Ratings	11
Keeping your pilot license	7	Becoming an airline transport pilot.....	12
		To learn more	13

Every effort is made to ensure that the information in this booklet is accurate and up to date at the time of publishing, but numerous changes can occur with time, especially in regard to airspace and legislation. Readers are reminded to obtain appropriate up-to-date information.



Abbreviations

ATPL	Airline transport pilot license
BFR	Biennial flight review
CPL	Commercial pilot license
ELP	English language proficiency
JCAA	Jamaica Civil Aviation Authority

PPL	Private pilot license
VFR	Visual flight rules
ASWI	Aeronautical School of the West Indies



Introduction

Flying is fun. Flying is a challenge.

Did you know that you can fly right now? Most people have their first taste of flying in a discovery flight at their local aero club or flying school.

A discovery flight usually lasts about 20 minutes. You will sit in the pilot's seat and be given your first lesson by a flight instructor. You don't need to know anything about flying to take a discovery flight, and there is no obligation to continue with lessons.

There are about 5 aero clubs and flying schools in Jamaica that operate aircraft and employ flight instructors, so owning an aircraft isn't a requirement.

It's best to contact a range of flight training organizations to compare their prices, services, and facilities – but don't choose solely on cost. Base your decision on the ability of each organization to help you achieve your ultimate goals.

Someone intending to fly only for recreation can opt for a private pilot license (PPL). If you're looking for a career in aviation, you can also train towards a commercial pilot license (CPL) or an airline transport pilot license (ATPL).

Whether you want to fly a small aircraft on sunny weekends, or fly passengers across the globe for an airline, you will follow a similar process. You will learn about yourself, the aircraft, the weather, the flying environment, and the rules pilots follow to fly safely.

As well as the cost of flight training, there are costs for medical examinations, theory examinations, and flight tests. Your flight training organization should help you plan for this.

There are other organizations you will encounter as you learn to fly. Air traffic control and flight planning is run by the Authority. Weather information is supplied by the Met Office. Aviation examinations are conducted by Jamaican Civil Aviation Authority. The Airport Authority of Jamaica carries out aviation security requirements and issues airport identity cards. There are links to these organizations on the JCAA website.

Every participant in Jamaica's aviation community shares a responsibility for safety and security. The role of the JCAA is to see that aviation participants meet the standards set by the Minister of Transport in the public interest.

Fit and proper person

The JCARs as amended 2012 requires applicants for an aviation document, including pilot licenses, to be able to hold an aviation medical certificate (class 1 or class 2)

To be considered a fit and proper person you must, among other things, have demonstrated a respect for the law, such that the Authority may have confidence in your ability to fly within the Civil Aviation Rules.

When you apply for your license, you must provide the Jamaica Civil Aviation Authority with information to make this assessment. There is information on the applicable JCAA forms to guide you through the process.

It can take some time to get the information required to accompany your application, and your flight training organization should advise you when to start this process.

As with the medical certificate, it is a good idea to make sure you qualify as a fit and proper person before beginning flight training, to avoid possible disappointment.

You are required to remain a fit and proper person throughout the operating life of your license.

For more information on the process, see www.jcaa.gov.jm.

English language proficiency

Applications for a PPL, CPL, or ATPL must include evidence that the applicant has demonstrated English language proficiency (ELP) to at least the Level 4 standard prescribed by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

The test itself is not a technical examination and aims only to test English language proficiency to the ICAO standards.

For more information, see www.jcaa.gov.jm

Obtaining your private pilot license

This is the first step in your Pilot Career.

A private pilot can't be paid or rewarded to fly and may not fly an aircraft that is being operated for hire or reward.

You can start learning to fly an aircraft at any age, but you may not fly solo nor obtain a private pilot license until you are 17 years old.

To gain a PPL, you must complete several steps, including ground school, practical flying and written examinations. The first step is a medical examination.

Medical

Private pilots must pass a class 2 medical examination, that can only be carried out by designated civil aviation medical examiners. Your aero club or flight school will provide you with a list of these doctors in your area, and they are listed on the JCAA website. During the class 2 medical examination, your past medical history and current medical status will be assessed. Additional investigations may be requested. It's worth talking to a designated medical examiner before your appointment, as they will be able to explain this in greater detail.

If you are unable to pass your medical examination, you can continue to fly with an instructor, but you cannot hold a PPL. So, to avoid possible disappointment, it's worthwhile making sure you can obtain your medical certificate before commencing flight training.

If you are aged under 40, you must renew your medical every five years. If you are over 40, your medical lasts for two years.





Flying lessons

You will learn to fly progressively. Early lessons cover the basics, like controlling the aircraft in straight and level flight. The structure and sequence of lessons creates a building block process, where previous learning is reinforced and developed in succeeding lessons. Eventually you will cover everything you need to be a capable and safe pilot.

Most students will fly solo for the first time after about 10 to 15 hours, with a minimum of 40 hours before obtaining their license. Many fly for 45–55 hours (based on competency) before they are ready to sit the flight test.

Each flying lesson typically lasts about 60 – 90 minutes. Your instructor will usually give you a briefing before the flight so you will know what to expect and what is required of you. A debriefing after the flight helps to consolidate what you have learned.

Make sure you record every flight. ASWI will provide you a pilot logbook to record the date of each flight, the aircraft type and registration, the name of your instructor, the length of your flight, where you went and what you did.

You can take your flying lessons as frequently as time and finances allow, but it's recommended you plan for regular sessions.

PPL examinations

The PPL examination is set at about the same level as secondary school examinations. Learning about the flying environment, and your aircraft, is part of being a safe and proficient pilot. ASWI will help you prepare for these examinations.

You don't have to pass the exams before you begin your flying lessons, but they are required in order to complete certain parts of your training. It is recommended that you plan for this with your instructor, as exam credits are only valid for a fixed period.

Air navigation and flight planning

You will learn to calculate the distance of your planned flight, the compass headings to fly, how long it will take you, and how much fuel you need. You will also learn to use maps that are specifically designed for aviation.

Aircraft technical knowledge

Understanding how your aircraft flies, and its systems, enables you to make safe flying decisions. As a trainee pilot, you will learn about aerodynamics, engines, electrical systems, flight instruments, and loading your aircraft.

Meteorology

The weather has a major bearing on your flying. Often, your flights will be cancelled or delayed because of the weather. You will learn about Jamaica's weather patterns, cloud formations, and how different weather conditions affect aircraft performance. This knowledge will help you develop decision-making skills essential to safe flying.

Human factors

Human error is one of the most common causes of air accidents worldwide. It is important, therefore, to understand the human element in aviation. Areas of study include: aeromedical factors, stress management, and decision-making.

Flight radiotelephony

Pilots keep in contact with air traffic controllers, and with each other, by radio. As a student pilot, you will learn the terms and phrases pilots use to navigate safely through both controlled and uncontrolled airspace. You will also learn how to operate your aircraft's transponder and emergency locator transmitter.

Air law

Everyone in aviation follows the same set of standards when they are flying. These standards are set out in the Jamaica Civil Aviation Regulations (JCARS). As a student pilot, you will develop a working knowledge of these rules.

License issuance

When you have gained your medical certificate, passed all the exams, have the required flying experience, and can demonstrate the competency standards, you will be ready to sit a flight test. Once you have passed the flight test, you can apply to the JCAA for the issuance of a PPL.

Keeping your pilot license

Getting your pilot license is only the first step.

To keep it current you must have carried out at least three takeoffs and landings in the preceding 90 days in the aircraft types that you wish to fly.

It is recommended that many pilots continue to take occasional refresher flights with an instructor.

Before gaining your PPL, it's advisable you plan your flying beyond the initial issuance of your license.

Budgeting for sufficient funds to allow you to fly often enough to remain both current and competent will help you retain your license.

Aircraft type ratings

Pilots are only permitted to fly the aircraft for which they are rated to fly. When first learning to fly, you will take lessons in the same type of aircraft.

Once you have your pilot license, you may choose to learn to fly other types

Ratings

Once you have your pilot license you can develop many more skills.

You can train for, and gain, additional qualifications called ratings. Examples are: aerobatic rating, glider tow rating, and an instrument rating. Remember that you cannot be paid or rewarded to fly with a PPL.

You can also take specialist training in mountain flying, formation flying, competition flying, or night flying. While not formalized with a rating, this training is usually recorded in your logbook.



Becoming a commercial pilot

Many very experienced pilots in Jamaica are content to fly simply for fun. To work as a pilot, you must hold a CPL.

Pilots with a CPL may fly as pilot-in-command on a single pilot aircraft, or as a co-pilot on a multi-crew aircraft. You can hold a CPL once you are 18 years old.

The CPL includes both theoretical and practical training, the first step being your medical certificate.



Medical

Commercial pilots must pass a class 1 medical examination with more requirements than the class 2 examination for a PPL. During the class 1 medical, your past medical history and current medical status will be assessed. Additional investigations may be requested. It is a good idea to talk to a designated medical examiner prior to your appointment. ASWI can provide you with a list of designated medical examiners in your area, and they are listed on the JCAA website.

It's a good idea to obtain your medical certificate before beginning flight training for a CPL in order to avoid possible disappointment.

A class 1 medical certificate must be renewed annually if you are aged less than 40. For single-pilot air operations carrying passengers, renewal is every six months if you are 40 and over.

Flying

To be a commercial aeroplane pilot you must have completed a minimum of 200 hours of flying training before you are eligible to sit your flight test. Many people, however, do not sit this test until they have about 215 to 230 hours.

Some schools teach commercial pilots in full-time courses that involve integrated flight and theory training. Others provide an 'on demand' training process where you can train for your CPL in your own time, advancing as you can afford the lessons.

It is advisable, however, to maintain a regular training programme to progress efficiently. This needs to coordinate theory examination passes and their validity periods with relevant flight training requirements. A personalized training programme can be planned with your instructor.

You should talk to several training organizations and choose the package that best suits your needs and goals in aviation. Your commercial flight training will follow a set syllabus and will include cross-country flying and instrument flying. You will be expected to meet a higher standard than for your PPL.



Examinations

Commercial pilots must pass examinations in air law, flight navigation general, meteorology, principles of flight and aircraft performance, general aircraft technical knowledge, and human factors. These are similar to tertiary level examinations.

In addition, a demonstration of English language proficiency will be required if not passed beforehand.

CPL issuance

When you hold a current class 1 medical certificate, have passed the CPL written examinations, have the required flying experience, and have passed the practical flight test, you can apply to the JCAA for the issuance of a CPL.

You can now seek employment as a pilot, but unless you have an instrument rating, you may only fly under visual flight rules (VFR). This means that you must be able to see the surface to navigate – you cannot fly into clouds. Possible careers include VFR charter, scenic flying, and agricultural flying.

When employed as a CPL you will have ongoing competency checks at least annually to ensure that you are flying to the required standard.

The next step for many CPL pilots is to gain a number of ratings that will give them more qualifications and opportunities to work as a pilot.

Ratings

As well as ratings such as the flight instructor rating, many CPL holders will want to obtain an instrument rating.

Becoming a flight instructor

Once you are a commercial pilot, you can do further flight training and study to become a flight instructor. Newly qualified flight instructors are called Class 2 instructors. As a Class 2 instructor you may teach student pilots, although you will work under the supervision of an experienced (Class 1) instructor.

Instrument rating

If you want to expand your employment options with a view to becoming an airline pilot, you will need an instrument rating. This allows you to fly in IFR conditions, navigating with reference to the aircraft instruments. Possible careers include freight and charter operations, or you can fly for an airline.

Type rating on gas turbine powered aircraft

Airlines, some freight or charter companies, helicopter, parachute, and agricultural companies, operate aircraft that are powered by gas turbine engines. These are different from the piston engine aircraft you will train in. In order to fly a turbine-powered aircraft you will need to pass a basic turbine knowledge examination. This is a prerequisite of a type rating in your first turbine-powered aircraft.

Becoming an airline transport pilot

For aircraft that are engaged in an air transport operation, or an operation for hire or reward, the pilots must hold an ATPL.

To apply for an ATPL, you must be 21 years old, hold a current instrument rating, and have 1500 hours total flight time in an aeroplane. You must also demonstrate English proficiency, pass written examinations, and complete a flight test with a flight examiner.

When employed as an airline pilot, you will have on-going competency checks to ensure that you are continuing to fly to the required standard.



To learn more

To find out more, search for your local flight training organization through the internet, the *Yellow Pages*, or aviation magazines. It is also a good idea to talk to pilots and ask about their experiences.

The JCAA website is also a great place to find other helpful resources at www.jcaa.gov.jm



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www.jcaa.gov.jm

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