# Part 61 Overview: Key Requirements for Pilots

## Essential Documents for Flight - 61.3

* Carry your pilot certificate.
* Have a government-issued photo ID.
* Hold a valid medical certificate.

## Alcohol and Drug Offenses - 61.15

* Violations can lead to denial of pilot applications or revocation of certificates.

## Third Class Medical for Pilots - 61.23

* Required for exercising student or private pilot privileges.

## Qualifications for PIC (Pilot in Command) - 61.31

* Must have the right category, class, and type ratings for the aircraft.
* For **Complex Airplanes**:
  + Receive and log training from an instructor.
  + Obtain a one-time endorsement certifying proficiency.
* For **High-Performance Airplanes** (over 200 horsepower):
  + Complete requisite ground and flight training.
  + Acquire a one-time endorsement for proficiency.
* For **Pressurized Aircraft Operation** above 25,000 feet:
  + Complete necessary ground training.
  + Earn an endorsement (topics listed under 61.31(g)).
* For **Tailwheel Airplanes**:
  + Undergo flight training with an instructor.
  + Get an endorsement (tasks specified in 61.31(i)).

## Logging Flight Time - 61.51

* Flight time for certificates, ratings, flight reviews, or currency must be properly logged.
* While not necessarily in a traditional "logbook," records must meet the section's logging criteria.
* Many commercially available logbooks are designed to comply with these requirements.

## Flight Review Essentials - 61.56

* Required every 24 months to maintain piloting privileges.
* Must include at least 1 hour of ground instruction and 1 hour of flight training.
* The review covers Part 91 regulations and maneuvers as determined by the instructor.
* Completing an airman practical test resets the 24-month flight review requirement.

## Pilot Currency Requirements - 61.57

* To carry passengers, a pilot must, within the last 90 days:
  + Complete 3 takeoffs and landings in the same category, class, and type (if required) of aircraft.
  + For tailwheel or night flying, these landings must be to a full stop under the respective conditions.
* This section also outlines currency achievements via flight training devices or simulators.

## Update of Permanent Mailing Address - 61.60

* Pilots must notify the FAA of a permanent mailing address change within 30 days.
* Failing to do so within this timeframe means you cannot exercise your certificate privileges.
* Address updates can now be done online via the FAA website.

## Glider and Ultralight Towing - 61.69

* **Qualifications:**
  + Hold at least a private pilot certificate with a powered aircraft category rating.
  + Accumulate 100 hours of flight experience in the category, class, and type if needed.
* **Instructor Endorsement:**
  + Receive ground and flight training for towing operations.
  + Obtain an instructor's endorsement after completing training.

## Class B Airspace for Student Pilots - 61.95

* **Training and Endorsement Requirements:**
  + Complete ground and flight training in the specific Class B airspace intended for operation.
  + Acquire a logbook endorsement from an instructor for that specific Class B airspace.
* **Operations to Airports Within Class B:**
  + Must receive training and an endorsement for the specific airport within Class B airspace.
* **Restrictions:**
  + Notwithstanding endorsements, several Class B airports prohibit student pilot operations.
  + Prohibited airports are listed in FAR 91 Appendix D Section 4, including major hubs like Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York, among others.

## Recreational Pilot Privileges and Limitations - 61.101

Recreational pilots enjoy flying with a unique set of privileges and restrictions. Here's a concise overview of what's expected:

### Privileges of a Recreational Pilot

* **Passenger Limit**: Carry no more than one passenger.
* **Cost Sharing**: Pay no less than the pro-rata share of the operating costs.
* **Flight Proximity**: Fly within 50 nautical miles (NM) of the departure airport after receiving the necessary training and endorsements.
* **Additional Training for Extended Operations**:
  + Receive endorsements for cross-country flights beyond 50 NM.
  + Obtain endorsements to enter Class B, C, and D airspace.

### Restrictions on Recreational Pilots

* **Aircraft Limitations:**
  + Not permitted to be PIC of an aircraft certified for more than 4 occupants.
  + Prohibited from flying multi-engine aircraft.
  + Cannot fly aircraft with over 180 horsepower (except rotorcraft).
  + No flying retractable gear aircraft or aircraft classified as powered-lift, glider, airship, balloon, powered parachute, or weight-shift-control.
* **Operational Limitations:**
  + Not allowed to act as PIC for compensation or hire.
  + Cannot fly in furtherance of business.
  + No flying between sunset and sunrise.
  + Must avoid airports with operational control towers unless endorsed.
  + Cannot fly above 10,000 feet mean sea level (MSL) or 2,000 feet above ground level (AGL), whichever is higher.
  + Prohibited from being PIC when flight or surface visibility is less than 3 statute miles (sm).
* **Recreational vs. Private Pilot License**
  + While the recreational pilot license comes with several restrictions, it can be a stepping stone for some aviators.
  + For those seeking fewer limitations and more freedom in the sky, obtaining a private pilot license is highly advisable.

## Eligibility Criteria for a Private Pilot License - 61.103

* **Age**: Must be at least 17 years old (16 for glider or balloon).
* **Language Proficiency**: Proficient in reading, writing, speaking, and understanding English.
* **Endorsements & Tests**:
  + Obtain an endorsement for the practical test.
  + Successfully pass the required knowledge test.
  + Complete the practical test (checkride).
* **Flight Experience**: Meet the flight requirements specified in part 61.109.
* **Existing Credentials**: Hold a U.S. student pilot, recreational pilot, or sport pilot certificate.

## Flight Time Requirements for Single Engine Land - 61.109

* **Total Flight Time**: 40 hours minimum, including:
  + **Dual Instruction**: At least 20 hours with an instructor.
  + **Solo Flight**: 10 hours flying solo.
* **Cross Country Training**:
  + 3 hours of cross-country flight training.
  + A night cross-country flight over 100 nautical miles (NM) total distance.
  + 10 night takeoffs and full-stop landings.
* **Instrument Skills**:
  + 3 hours of simulated instrument time.
* **Pre-Checkride Preparation**:
  + 3 hours of flight training within 2 calendar months before the test.
* **Solo Cross Country**:
  + 5 hours of solo cross-country time.
  + A solo cross country flight of 150 NM total distance with full-stop landings at three points, and one leg with a straight-line distance of more than 50 NM.
* **Tower Operations**:
  + 3 takeoffs and landings to a full stop at an airport with an operational control tower.

## Privileges and Limitations as a Private Pilot - 61.113

Becoming a private pilot opens a world of aviation opportunities, but with them come specific regulations to ensure safety and compliance. Here's a breakdown of what you can and can't do as a private pilot:

### Privileges of a Private Pilot

* **Acting as Pilot in Command (PIC):**
  + Private pilots cannot be compensated for carrying passengers or property.
  + You can be PIC in connection with business, as long as the flight is incidental and there’s no compensation for carrying passengers or property.
  + You're allowed to share operating expenses (fuel, oil, airport fees, rental charges) as long as you pay at least your pro-rata share.
* **Charitable, Non-profit, or Community Events:**
  + You may volunteer as PIC for events, complying with the requirements of 91.146, including having at least 500 hours of flight time.
* **Reimbursement for Certain Operations:**
  + You can receive reimbursement for actual operating expenses related to search and location operations, with stipulations, and under an approved agency.
* **Aircraft Sales Demonstrations:**
  + If you have over 200 hours of flight time, you can demonstrate aircraft to potential buyers.
* **Flight Testing:**
  + Under some conditions, you can conduct flight tests for light-sport aircraft certification.
* **Flying Without a Medical Certificate:**
  + You may act as PIC without a medical if you meet the criteria outlined in 61.23(c)(3).

### Not Explicitly Prohibited Activities

* There's a broad scope of activities you can engage in as a private pilot. The training is comprehensive, and a solid understanding of regulations is crucial because:
  + You're not explicitly restricted from many actions, but you must always ensure what you're doing is both safe and legal.

### The Balance of Freedom and Responsibility

As a private pilot, the sky is vast with freedom, but it's crucial to balance that with an in-depth knowledge of your responsibilities. Staying informed about the regulations keeps you flying high without overstepping legal boundaries. Remember, the regulations are there to protect you, your passengers, and the integrity of the aviation community.