

Nebraska Flight Center

New Student Pilot Guide



Welcome to Nebraska Flight Center! Becoming a pilot is an exciting journey. This guide walks you through the key steps to get started, from completing your FAA paperwork to preparing for your first flight lessons.



New Student Pilot Checklist

STEP 1 — Get Your FAA Medical Certificate

We recommend completing your medical early in your training. You will need an FAA medical certificate before your first solo flight.

Complete MedXPress

- ☐ Create an account and complete your application through [FAA MedXPress](#).
- ☐ Save your MedXPress confirmation number.

Tip: Remember to be truthful in your responses, but also take time to understand each question and how to respond appropriately. It may also be helpful to review [AOPA Medication Database](#) (see note in step 5 about joining AOPA) to understand if there are any FAA limitations on medications you may take. Also, it may be helpful to save or print your MedXPress submission because anything disclosed on your initial application will need to be repeated on future applications.

Schedule an Aviation Medical Examiner (AME)

- ☐ Contact an [FAA-authorized AME](#) and schedule your medical examination.

Some Omaha-area AMEs include:

- **Dr. Andrea Lawlor:** 402-330-1410
- **Dr. James Steier:** 402-354-8990
- **Dr. Lloyd A. Pierre:** 402-991-3393

- ☐ Bring your MedXPress confirmation number and any medical and identity documentation requested by your AME.

- ☐ Complete your FAA medical examination.
- ☐ Keep your medical certificate in a safe place.

Tip: If you have questions about whether a medical condition, medication, or previous medical issue could affect your certification, discuss it with an AME **before** beginning the application.

STEP 2 — Apply for Your Student Pilot Certificate

Your Student Pilot Certificate is separate from your medical certificate. You need it before you can fly solo.

- ☐ Create an account with [IACRA](#).
 - ☐ Complete the Student Pilot Certificate application.
 - ☐ Provide the required personal and identification information.
 - ☐ Work with your instructor to complete the application process.
 - ☐ Keep your Student Pilot Certificate information with your important aviation documents.
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STEP 3 — Provide Identity Documentation and Complete TSA Requirements, if Applicable

U.S. citizens must provide the flight school with proof of identity and citizenship with one of the following:

- ☐ Valid, unexpired U.S. passport
- ☐ Original or government-issued birth certificate of the U.S., American Samoa, or Swains Island AND a government-issued picture ID
- ☐ Original certificate of birth abroad with raised seal (Form FS-545 or DS-1350) AND a government-issued picture ID
- ☐ Original certificate of U.S. citizenship with raised seal (Form N-560 or N-561) or a Certificate of Repatriation (Form N-581) AND government-issued pictured ID
- ☐ Original U.S. Naturalization Certificate with raised seal (Form N-550 or N-570) AND a government-issued picture ID

If you are **not a U.S. citizen or U.S. national**, you may need to complete the TSA Flight Training Security Program (FTSP) process before receiving flight training.

- ☐ Confirm with Nebraska Flight Center whether TSA requirements apply to you.
- ☐ Create your account with the [TSA Flight Training Security Program](#).
- ☐ Complete the required security threat assessment and documentation.

- ☐ Complete fingerprinting if required.
 - ☐ Receive TSA approval before beginning training that requires FTSP authorization.
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STEP 4 — Start Your Online Ground School

Choose the ground school that fits your learning style. Nebraska Flight Center students may use any reputable online ground school, provided it covers the FAA Private Pilot knowledge requirements and provides the appropriate endorsement when you're ready to take the written exam. Your instructor can help you decide which program is the best fit for you.

- ☐ Begin the private pilot online ground school course.

5 Popular Online Private Pilot Ground Schools

1. [Sporty's Learn to Fly Course](#)
One of the best-known all-in-one options. It combines video instruction, interactive lessons, FAA knowledge-test preparation, and mobile/TV access. Sporty's is particularly appealing for students who want a polished, comprehensive course with lifetime access.
2. [King Schools Private Pilot](#)
One of the longest-established names in aviation education. King Schools offers video-based instruction, test preparation, practice questions, and lifetime course access. Its Private Pilot course currently includes preparation for both the FAA knowledge and practical tests.
3. [Pilot Institute Private Pilot Made Easy](#)
A popular modern alternative that emphasizes shorter video lessons, visual instruction, and extensive test preparation. It also offers a knowledge-test pass guarantee and ongoing course updates.
4. [Gold Seal Ground School](#)
An interactive program designed specifically around helping students understand the material rather than simply memorize test questions. It combines video, text, quizzes, and practice tests and includes an FAA knowledge-test endorsement.
5. [Gleim Aviation Private Pilot](#)
A long-standing aviation training publisher known particularly for its comprehensive study materials and extensive test-preparation resources. It's a good choice for students who prefer a more traditional, information-dense approach to ground school.

Upon completion of ground school, the provider will generate a certificate of completion that will be the required endorsement to take the knowledge and practical tests when you are ready for those.

STEP 5 — Join the Aviation Community

Flying is about more than learning how to operate an airplane. One of the best ways to grow as a pilot is to connect with other pilots, instructors, aviation professionals, and fellow students.

Consider joining an aviation organization:

- [AOPA — Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association](#) — A great resource for general aviation pilots, with safety and training resources, flight-planning tools, advocacy, and access to experienced pilots and aviation experts.
- [NGPA — National Gay Pilots Association](#) — Connects LGBTQ+ pilots, aviation professionals, and enthusiasts through local chapters, mentoring, scholarships, events, and networking. Membership is open to people throughout the aviation community.
- [Women in Aviation International \(WAI\)](#) — Provides networking, mentoring, professional development, scholarships, and local chapters for people interested in aviation and aerospace. Membership is open to women and men.
- **Other organizations:** As you progress through training, look for organizations that match your interests, career goals, and the type of flying you hope to do.

Connect locally, too. Some of the most valuable aviation relationships can come from simply talking with other pilots and students in your area. Follow and participate in local aviation communities, including:

- **Nebraska Flight Center:** Follow the flight school on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for school updates, events, aircraft, student accomplishments, and opportunities to connect with other NFC students and pilots.
- **Nebraska Pilots:** [Nebraska Pilots on Facebook](#) — A place to connect with pilots across Nebraska, ask questions, share experiences, and learn about local aviation.
- **NGPA Omaha — Cornhusker Flyers:** [Cornhusker Flyers on Facebook](#) — The Omaha-area NGPA community, offering opportunities to meet other pilots and aviation enthusiasts and participate in local events.

Don't be afraid to introduce yourself. Aviation communities are generally welcoming to new pilots. Attend a meetup, ask questions, participate in a fly-in, or simply start a conversation at the airport. The pilots you meet during training may become friends, mentors, flying partners, or professional connections throughout your aviation career.



Your First-Day Shopping List

You don't need to buy everything immediately. Your instructor can help you determine what you'll need as training progresses.

Must-Have / Recommended

- ☐ **Pilot logbook**
- ☐ **Aviation headset**—we recommend one with Active Noise Cancellation (ANC)
- ☐ **Headset case**
- ☐ **Sunglasses**
- ☐ **Kneeboard**—with small notepad
- ☐ **E6B Flight Computer**—Pro tip: the electronic/calculator version is allowed to be used during your knowledge test
- ☐ **Pens**—we recommend fine point 0.5mm black or blue
- ☐ **Small flashlight**
- ☐ **View-limiting device**—these come in a few different forms—foggles, hoods, and clip-on shades—to suit your preferences.

Nice to Have

- ☐ Flight bag
- ☐ iPad/tablet
- ☐ Electronic flight bag subscription—we recommend [ForeFlight's](#) Starter plan (their Essentials plan is more helpful as you move into instrument training)—check with your instructor first because you can both take advantage of referral savings if you sign up with your instructor's referral link.
- ☐ Portable battery/power bank
- ☐ Charging cables
- ☐ Water bottle

Don't feel pressured to purchase expensive aviation equipment right away. Talk with your instructor before making major purchases.



Quick Start Checklist

As you begin regular flight training, make sure you complete these key items:

- ☐ Complete FAA MedXPress
- ☐ Schedule your AME appointment
- ☐ Obtain your FAA medical certificate
- ☐ Create your IACRA account
- ☐ Apply for your Student Pilot Certificate
- ☐ Complete TSA requirements if applicable
- ☐ Start your online ground school
- ☐ Purchase a pilot logbook
- ☐ Purchase an aviation headset

- ☐ Establish your training schedule with your instructor
- ☐ Join aviation organizations and connect with local pilots and students.

Welcome to Nebraska Flight Center!

You don't have to figure everything out at once. Your instructor will guide you through the process and let you know what to work on next.

Study hard. Fly often. Ask questions. Have fun.