

The Incomplete Guide to Becoming a Pilot

Welcome to the Club! The Finger Lakes Area Pilots have been around since 2007. Previously we were known as Seneca Aviation Inc. since 1983. We fly out of Finger Lakes Regional Airport and currently consist of over 20 members.

I'll try to keep this as up to date as possible but below is a list of many of the items that you'll need to get started on your aviation journey. If you already have a certificate, some of this will be extra but for our new members that are just starting training, this will be a great starting point.

I've tried to organize all of our documents and info in a central location so members can access. Below is the link to the Google Drive where you can find countless documents about the club, FAA regs, meeting minutes, etc.

[Google Drive](#)

If you ever need to contact the club, just email fingerlakespilots@gmail.com this is monitored by myself and I'll get back to you ASAP. This email is passed along as leadership changes so it is always a good way to get in touch. The newest addition to our channels of communication is a Discord server. [Discord Server](#) Everyone can join and once you are an official member, more "members-only" channels will be unlocked.

All reservations and charges are managed through [FlightCircle](#). You will get a profile and will be able to see the plane schedule and book time. When you want to fly simply click on the reservation and select "Dispatch". This will bring up a screen with a few reminders on maintenance and make sure that you are good to fly. This will also have the current Hobbs and Tach time. Make sure this is correct when you begin the flight. This is what determines the flying charges and we need to keep it accurate. After flying you will "Check-In" the flight. Here you will put in the new Hobbs and Tach time and calculate the charge. Be sure to put in the fuel added, cost and gallons, so we can keep track of it. If you have block time, it will automatically select that to pay the bill. If you don't use block time select "ACH" or "Card" to use the account on file. A checking account and credit card can be linked directly to FlightCircle. I recommend using a checking account as there is no additional credit card surcharge added to the bill. Credit card payments incur an additional fee to help cover the club's cost to process the transaction.

The club website is below. This is a good starting point to send new people who are interested in joining the club. Feel free to check it out. I've been keeping a log of all the places members have flown and we've built a map with pins at each of the airports. Every time we venture out somewhere new, another pin goes on the map! What new destinations will you add to the list?

<https://fingerlakespilots.org/>

Below is a list of the different things you'll need on your way to your pilot certificate...

1. Get an FAA 3rd Class Medical - You don't need this to start training but will need it for solo. It's nothing more than an in-depth physical. Assuming no major health issues you should be fine. There are 3 classes of medical certificate. A 2nd class is required for commercial work and a 1st is required for the airlines. You can get a

higher class than you need if you like, it just involves more testing and money. You can find an AME (Aviation Medical Examiner) on the [FAA Website](#).

2. Get an IACRA FTN Number: This is the FAA registration for a student pilot cert. This number will live with you throughout your training. Once you fill out the application an instructor will need to log on and "approve" the application. This is typically done on the first meeting with the CFI. ([FAA IACRA Site](#))
3. Get Started on Ground School: There are several online ground schools. I've made a list of many of them on the [website](#). I recommend Sporty's. It has a series of well-made videos and each one ends in a quiz. Once you get through the videos you will take a few practice tests. Once you pass a few tests with an 80 or better you will get the sign-off to take the real written exam. The sign-off to take the written test never expires but once you take the actual test you need to finish the training within 2 years. Time it accordingly. You can have your written complete before you start flying, I'd recommend having at least the signoff taken care of. You don't want to be working on the written at the same time as the flight training.
4. Contact an Instructor to schedule training. We currently have 2, Fernando and Hunter. You can fly with whichever instructor you like. Sometimes throughout the training, you may fly with the other instructor to act as a second set of eyes to check in on your training progress. (Fernando Anduze - 832-515-0910, fanduze@gmail.com, Hunter Mollin - (315) 243-4207, hunteramollin@gmail.com) The training side of things is handled between you and the instructor. All payments for the instructor's time go directly to them and the club doesn't take a cut. The club only manages payments for the plane.
5. Pick up a copy of the FAR/AIM (Federal Aviation Regulation/Aviation Information Manual) and other useful textbooks - There are several handbooks that will be handy to get. Many of the regulations and handbooks are available in PDF form for free and can also be accessed through ForeFlight. I keep a folder of many of them in the Google Drive under Resources. [Google Drive - Resources](#)
6. Logbook - You'll need to log your hours somehow. You are free to use a paper or electronic logbook. ForeFlight and LogTen are two good options. One disclaimer on foreflight, this is a subscription based service so if your subscription runs out, you can't access your logbook. It's not deleted but you'll need to pay up. LogTen is free for your first 250hrs and a good alternative to Foreflight.
7. Podcasts - As with anything, there are a ton of podcasts about flying and training. Check out Opposing Bases, The Finer Points, and The Private Pilot Podcast by MZeroA. There are others but these 3 are great. You'll learn a ton, laugh a little, and it will reinforce a lot of things from your training.
8. Club Meetings - We have a club meeting every 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7pm at the airport. This is a great time to catch up with other members, get out of the house, hang out at the airport.. all that stuff. We discuss current club news as well as

the status of the plane along with any maintenance issues. The instructors typically have some discussion topics to share from the previous months teachings.

As always feel free to reach out and I'll help in any way I can. We are honored to be able to be a part of your aviation journey and guide you along the path as far as you choose to take it.

Welcome to FLAPS!

-Jim Hickel, President

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