

The Incomplete Guide to Becoming a Pilot

Welcome to the Club! The Finger Lakes Area Pilots has been around since 2007 and previously it was 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 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're 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. There are a few tutorials of how to use the site in the Google Drive. 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 how the charge for the flight is calculated and it needs to be accurate. After flying you will "Check-In" the flight. Here you will put in the new Hobbs and Tach time, and it will calculate the total cost. Be sure to put in the gallons and cost of fuel added 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 you can pay directly from FlightCircle with a credit card or checking account. Please make sure all payments are made after your flight. We prefer that members do not carry a balance on their account. Dues charges will be added to the account automatically, we ask that you pay these as soon as you can as well.

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 in the map! This is a great way to show what you can do with general aviation. What could be a 5-6 hr drive can turn into an hour flight.

<https://fingerlakespilots.org/>

Items to take care of early in training or before you start flying...

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. 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.

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 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. The sign-off to take the written 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 Bob. Both former military pilots. Bob flew in the Air Force and Fernando flew in the Navy. Fernando went on to work for Delta and was a 777 captain. (Fernando Anduze - 832-515-0910, fanduze@gmail.com, Bob Young - 315-945-1303, ryoung14@rochester.rr.com) The training side of things is handled between you and the instructor. All payments go directly to them. You make your own schedule, and we don't have a set syllabus to follow. We've got a bit more freedom compared to a Part 141 Flight School.
5. Pick up a FAR/AIM and other useful regs/textbooks - There are several handbooks and regs that will be handy to get. Many of the regs 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. A paper logbook will work fine you can get them online. There are also electronic versions that can be used. 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.
7. Podcasts - As with anything, there are a ton of podcasts about flying and training. Check out Opposing Bases, The Finer Points, 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 great time to catch up with other members, get out of the house, hang out at the airport, etc...

As always feel free to reach out and I'll help in any way that I can.

Welcome to FLAPS!

-Jim Hickel, President

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