



The Facts About Getting a Helicopter Licence

Who or What is Garden City Helicopters?

Garden City Helicopters was established in Christchurch in 1983. We also have bases located in Nelson and Greymouth. Garden City Helicopters operates a Fleet of 4 x R22's, 3 x AS350 Squirrel's, 1 x AS350B3 Squirrel, 1 x R44 Raven II and 2 x BK117. At our Christchurch base our helicopters are used in a wide range of commercial operations including: TV coverage, lifting, fire fighting, surveying, remote repairs, frost protection, transmission line, tourist and general charter work.

For a number of years Garden City Helicopters has been providing helicopter rescue operations out of our three South Island bases. We operate fully dedicated BK117 twin engine rescue helicopters out of Christchurch and Nelson and fully dedicated AS350Bs out of Nelson and Greymouth, This network is further supported by our Cessna 421 and 441 fixed wing air ambulances operating as the New Zealand Flying Doctor Service based at Christchurch International Airport.

Why Train with Garden City Helicopters?

With a large variety of helicopter operations and choice of bases at which to learn to fly, Garden City Helicopters is the ideal company at which to start your aviation experience. Some other advantages of learning to fly with Garden City Helicopters are:

All of our air rescue pilots are instructors so you will learn from **very experienced pilots** from a wide variety of backgrounds.

You are training with an organization which operates helicopters on a commercial basis and students are encouraged to help out with these operations, your involvement providing invaluable experience that prospective employers regard very highly.

The South Island's terrain proves to be very challenging, with the rugged Southern Alps used extensively during your flight training both at the Private Pilot Licence and Commercial Pilot Licence level.

Garden City Helicopters is a 7day a week operation.

We strongly suggest you research thoroughly which flight training provider you choose. **The best way to do this is to talk to potential future employers in the aviation industry and ask them who they would recommend.**

Is it Hard to Learn To Fly A Helicopter?

Learning to fly a helicopter is not particularly difficult, not nearly as difficult as most non-flyers think and can be mastered by practically anyone who is willing to devote a little time and effort to it. An important point to note is that you will be taught under the supervision of Civil Aviation authorized Instructors. Because flying is taught on an individual basis the instructor will tailor the course to suit your individual requirements.

You will learn to fly by actually handling the controls of the helicopter. Under the supervision of your instructor you will not only learn to take off, land, hover, lift loads, fly in the mountains and from city to city, you will also learn how to make the aircraft do exactly what you want it to do in any situation.

Initially you will train towards a Private Licence, which is a stand-alone licence allowing you to take non-paying passengers. From there you can if you wish, continue training towards a Commercial Licence, (CPL), which allows you to work as a pilot. By the time you are ready for your Commercial Licence, you will be a competent pilot. The experience of further flying hours will certainly teach you more, but you will be well equipped with all the knowledge and skills necessary for safe helicopter flying.

What's Involved In Learning To Fly a Helicopter?

There are two components to learning to fly – theory and practical.

THEORY:

The Theory covers the following:

- Aircraft Technical Knowledge
- Principles of Flight
- Navigation and Flight Planning
- Meteorology
- Human Factors
- Flight Radiotelephony
- Air Law

CAA regulations state that prior to flying solo cross country, all PPL theory exams must be successfully completed. We add to this that for students, who at the start are aiming at CPL, ideally should have successfully completed the CPL theory component. The main reason for this is that the theory component is relatively inexpensive but without it you cannot complete a CPL. Also, completing the theory prior to commencing flight training allows students to focus solely on flight training. Courses for theory subjects to both PPL and CPL level are available although the exams can usually be completed with self-study.

The theory can be conducted by Nelson Aviation College in Motueka. The courses run three times a year, starting in late January, May and August. These courses run for 16 weeks approximately. Alternatively theory can be conducted in Christchurch at the International Aviation Academy on a similar timetable. Evening classes for the PPL subjects only are offered by the Canterbury Aero Club. The PPL theory courses offered by the Canterbury Aero Club / International Aviation Academy are primarily for fixed wing pilots, however all but PPL Airtech are acceptable for the PPL(H). A Helicopter PPL student will need to study, and sit the exam for the PPL(H) Airtech exam independently. We can help you source exam syllabuses, study guides, practice exams, and help you book the theory exams.



PRACTICAL:

Private Pilot's Licence

To obtain a PPL (H) you will require a minimum of 50 hours flight time, with a least 15 of these being solo. While these are the minimum hours, it is more common for students to need 60 hours to complete a PPL. This does not pose a problem or extra cost to students going on to do a CPL as the hours flown for PPL are included in the hours required for CPL.

Civil Aviation Rules covering pilot licences are specific about minimum requirements at www.caa.govt.nz/fulltext/acs/ac061_1-5.pdf while at the same time leaving much to the judgment of the instructor. For example the instructor determines when a student can go solo. When he/she is satisfied the student can handle the helicopter safely and has the radio operator licence, the instructor will then approve you for solo flight. The average student can expect to go solo after around 20 hrs of dual instruction.

Once you have gone solo, you continue to build both dual and solo experience, based around the training syllabus. For solo flights your instructor will OK each flight and you must go alone- sorry, no passengers yet!

Included in the 50 hours of flying for the PPL (H) is:

- 20 hours Dual instruction
- 15 hours Solo flight time
- 10 hours Cross-country Navigation training
- 5 hours Mountainous terrain flight training
- 5 hours Advanced dual instruction

Once you have completed the flying syllabus for the PPL (H) you will sit and hopefully pass your flight test. You will then be issued with your PPL (H), which means you can carry passengers anywhere in New Zealand. Prior to all flight tests Garden City Helicopters instructors conduct intensive mock flight tests to ensure students are ready.

This process has meant that students at Garden City Helicopters have had a first flight test pass rate of very close to 100%.

Commercial Pilot's Licence

Included in the 150 hours of flying for the CPL (H) is:

- 35 hours Dual instruction
- 35 hours Solo flight time
- 20 hours Cross-country Navigation training
- 10 hours Mountainous terrain flight training
- 10 hours Sling Load training
- 10 hours Night flight training *(Optional)*
- 2 hours Simulated instrument training *(Optional)*



The next step is to continue training and go on to complete a commercial Pilots Licence CPL (H). This Licence allows you to fly helicopters for a living. New Zealand Civil Aviation Rules state that for a CPL in helicopters you must complete a minimum of 150 hours total time, which must include the following.

As you can see the CPL syllabus is similar to the PPL but the level of proficiency required to pass the flight test is higher. Training therefore concentrates on the perfection of techniques and on building experience that will allow you to be able to fly helicopters on charter and aerial work for a living.

How Long Does it Take?

This is largely up to you. Flight training can be done in a few months, or some people spread it over a year or more. An ideal learning rate is for one lesson per day, 5-6 days a week but this doesn't have to be the case. How much each person does is usually determined by the individual's budget, time constraints, and motivation.

Flight training for a PPL (starting after the theory training) generally takes about 4 - 6 months to complete and is conducted at our Christchurch or Nelson Bases. A CPL may be obtained in 9 – 12 months (full time), or longer if training part-time.

How Much Does it Cost?

Please contact our office for a copy of our rates information. These rates are very competitive for training in New Zealand. The time you spend with your instructor in briefings before going flying is free. In addition to the cost of helicopter hire there are also many additional costs, such as theory books, medicals, and exams. Please note that these costs will be incurred at any flight training organization.

Does the New Zealand Licence meet the Requirements of other Countries Licences?

Yes, your New Zealand CPL (H) is easily converted to an Australian Commercial Pilots Licence under the Trans-Tasman Agreement. As an ICAO member state, Flight Training conducted in New Zealand can count towards Flight Experience requirements for FAA and JAA countries. We can also tailor your flight training to meet specific requirements.

What about Medical Examinations, Eyesight, Age?

These questions deal with the single subject of medical requirements. We assure you that you do not need to be a superman of any kind to be a good pilot, however there are minimum age requirements – 16 years for first solo and 17 years for a private or 18 years for a commercial licence, but there is nothing in the Rules about maximum age. In fact, assuming good health, advancing years have little to do with it. Many pilots wear glasses – however there are limits to the standard of sight and the doctor carrying out your initial medical will advise you of the standards.

We recommend that you have completed a Class 1 Commercial Medical **before you start your flight training**. There is a list of New Zealand CAA Medical Examiners at www.caa.govt.nz under Medical.

What Happens When I Get My Licence?

Once you obtain your Commercial Licence you are able to work for hire and reward within New Zealand, and in some overseas countries. This means that you can be employed to fly helicopters for a living, doing a job that is challenging, rewarding and above all, a job that you really enjoy.

The Helicopter industry has been very difficult to break into over the past few years but things are changing in New Zealand as many of the more senior pilots who started their careers during the deer recovery boom are reaching retirement age. The same trend is apparent on the international scene where, over the last twenty years, there has been an oversupply of pilots produced by the Vietnam War. As these veterans retire there are many companies looking for pilots who are keen and enthusiastic.

What Are The Job Prospects Like?

Essentially a CPL is a licence to learn, and you will have to continue to apply yourself and work really hard to make it to the next level. And it is at the next level when the true rewards are felt!

Short term, getting a job is difficult and you will have to be willing to travel away from home in search of anything that will afford you a 'foot in the door' of someone's hangar. Be prepared to work for little money in remote locations, initially on the ground in a supporting role. The jobs will not come to you, so you will need to be proactive in your approach.

On a more positive note, during this period of 'hangar time' you will be gaining valuable experience and contacts within the industry, learning from the bottom up what can be expected of you as a commercial helicopter pilot. It is important to maintain an association with people in the helicopter industry if you are serious about pursuing your goals (network).

Long term (1000 hrs flight time plus) job opportunities are plentiful. "So how do I get to 1000 hours?" you ask....

Again, this is where the hard work, perseverance and an ounce of luck come in. Training with a commercial operator (and not solely a flight training school) will give practical hands on experience and allow you the chance to meet a lot of people in the industry, whilst already having a foot in the door with at least one operator!

Try to gain ground employment i.e.; crewman, office hand, marketing etc and push for ferry flying and basic commercial work to build your hours, all the while working up to a stage where you have sufficient time in the log-book to consider going for an instructors rating. This is potentially a way to build hours, and also a marvelous way to fine tune your own piloting skills. However this avenue is best pursued by those who are actually interested in instructing, not just purely as a way to build hours.

Set realistic goals, decide what niche you would ultimately like to fit into and don't let go of that Goal! *Remember the only person who is interested in your aviation career is YOU.*

Commercial Operator versus Flight Training School - What is The Difference?

If your main ambition is to make a career out of flying helicopters, it is extremely important that you choose a training establishment that will not only give you the skills to fly a helicopter, but also equip you with the knowledge and expertise essential for a commercial pilot.

Garden City Helicopters is the only Westpac Rescue Helicopter Operator in New Zealand that offers professional pilot training.

Garden City Helicopters provides a comprehensive flight training program ensuring students gain a high level of experience in all areas of commercial helicopter operations. Students are actively involved in commercial work. A student's involvement in these operations provides invaluable experience that employers regard highly and that most other training organizations cannot offer.

To satisfy yourself you should make contact with various helicopter operators (potential future employers) and ask them who they would recommend to teach you to fly.





How Do I Start?

We recommend that everyone take an introductory flight of about 30 minutes. During this “low key” flight with one of our instructors you will be shown (by way of dual controls) how to fly the aircraft yourself. You will find out if you like the idea of flying and whether it’s for you. Very quickly you will see how enjoyable and challenging flying a helicopter can be.

Web sites to check out:

www.caa.govt.nz
www.justhelicopters.com
www.helicopters.com
www.pprune.com/forums/
<http://caanz.aspegexams.com/>

How Do I Book A Flight Or Obtain Further Information?

If you have any other questions, please don’t hesitate to ask. If you wish to book a Trial Flight, we can be contacted using the details below.

Contact: Garden City Helicopters

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