



Flight Training

GCH AVIATION



Learn
how to
Live Your Dream

www.gchaviation.com

Operated By GCH Aviation

What is a PPL or CPL? And which licence do I need?

Regardless of which type of aircraft you wish to fly (helicopter or fixed wing), the pilot training process in New Zealand follows a similar pattern.

In order to take passengers anywhere in NZ, you will need a **Private Pilot Licence (PPL)**. However this licence does NOT allow you to work as a pilot, or be paid for your services in any way. To do that, you will need a **Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL)**. In order to fly as a Captain on larger aircraft and passenger jets, you will need an **Air Transport Pilot Licence (ATPL)**. These Licences must be completed in the order above, so how much you have to learn will depend on what type of flying you want to do.

In addition to the basic licences above, there are optional Ratings that can be added to your licence. These involve learning additional skills, eg. for an Instrument Rating, or additional aircraft ratings. The time taken and the cost will vary depending on the rating and flight hours required.

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) regulates flying in NZ. They set and maintain the standards and enforce the Rules surrounding Aviation in NZ. You will also need to complete Aviation Theory exams, and an Aviation Medical. More detail on these will be given later in this document.

What's involved in learning to fly a Helicopter?

PPL (Helicopter) Requirements:

This licence entitles the person to pilot a helicopter carrying non fare paying passengers, or to “cost share”. See an instructor for more info on cost sharing.

To be eligible to sit the PPL issue flight test, the candidate:

- Must be at least 17 years of age
- Must have passed a Class 2 Medical by an approved Aviation Medical Examiner; OR a DL9 driver licence medical (must be Class 2 (2,3,4,5) with passenger (P) endorsement. Use of a DL9 medical involves reduced licence privileges.
- Must have completed all theory examinations (obtained PPL exam credit).
 - PPL Flight Navigation
 - PPL Airtech (Aircraft Technology / Principles of Flight) * Helicopter specific PPL
 - Meteorology
 - PPL Flight Radio Telephony
 - PPL Human Factors
 - PPL Air Law
- Must have a minimum of 50 hours flying experience, as detailed in Advisory Circular (AC) 61-3 including:
 - 20 hours Dual instruction (including minimum of 5 hours Advanced Dual instruction)
 - 15 hours solo
 - These hours include the specific requirements for:
 - Cross-country navigation training and approved Demonstration of Competency
 - Mountain Terrain Awareness Demonstration of Competency
- Must pass a PPL issue Flight Test!

Note: if the applicant is the holder of a valid PPL A (Aeroplane), he/she will only need to sit and pass the PPL Airtech (Helicopter) theory exam to gain theory exam credit for a PPL helicopter. This exam includes the Principles of Flight component.

Commercial Pilots



CPL (Helicopter) Requirements:

This licence entitles the holder to pilot a helicopter carrying fare paying passengers, and to be paid (for “hire or reward”). You must have a CPL to work as a helicopter pilot. The PPL is pre-requisite for the CPL, meaning that you must obtain a PPL before you can sit for the CPL. However the PPL/CPL theory exams may be completed in any order.

To be eligible to sit the CPL issue flight test, the candidate:

- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Must have passed a Class 1 Medical by an approved Aviation Medical Examiner;
- Must have completed all theory examinations (obtained CPL exam credit);
- Must hold a valid NZ PPL

CPL Flight Navigation

CPL Airtech (Aircraft Technology) * **Helicopter specific**

CPL Principles of Flight * **Helicopter specific**

CPL Meteorology

CPL Human Factors

CPL Air Law

- Must have a minimum of 150 hours flying experience, as detailed in Advisory Circular (AC) 61-5 including:

35 hours Dual instruction

35 hours solo

These hours include the specific requirements for:

External Load syllabus completion and endorsement;

Cross-country navigation training and Flight Test;

Mountain Terrain Awareness training and Competency Demo

Note: if the applicant is the holder of a valid CPL A (Aeroplane), he/she will only need to sit and pass the CPL Airtech (Helicopter) and CPL Principles of Flight (Helicopter) exams to gain theory exam credit for a CPL helicopter.



Theory, Medical & Flight Training

Theory

Ideally, applicants should complete, or mostly complete their theory exams prior to starting flight training. The most expensive element of flight training is the flight component. Therefore the best way to ensure efficiency is to fly as consistently as possible. This is harder if time and funds are split between theory, practical, and the rest of a busy life! We suggest doing the other (Medical and Theory) components first, then flying as regularly and consistently as possible once theory is complete.

This will help to make sure that there is minimum flight time spent re-learning forgotten/rusty skills. The CAA also has a legislative requirement that exam theory credit is obtained (all exams complete) before the solo cross-country training is started (at 25 – 30 hours of flight training).

Self-studying for the theory exams gives the most flexibility and is the most cost-effective option. See the "Theory and Medical info" document for details on how to get started on the theory, what's involved, study material and how to book the exams. If a candidate would like some assistance with the theory, there are a couple of options.

Private Tutoring

Although some assistance can be provided by our instructors for those doing their exams, if you need more one-on-one time, you may wish to consider hiring a private tutor. GCH don't provide formal private tutoring any longer but talk to an instructor for recommendations of someone who could help. You will need to pay your tutor directly.

E-Learning/theory courses:

Stoneybrook Training: <https://www.stoneybrook.training/>

Stoneybrook currently provide all the Helicopter specific PPL theory courses, and all but the (Helicopter specific) CPL Principles of Flight course, but that should be available soon.

Advanced Flight Training: <https://advancedflighttraining.co.nz/>

Canterbury Aero Club (CAC)/International Aviation Academy (IAA): although CAC/IAA no longer offer classroom based theory lessons, they do offer E-Learning modules for some PPL subjects. To access the E-Learning info, go to www.flighttraining.co.nz and click on the "ELEARNING" heading.

Please contact these providers directly for further theory course information.

PPL Airtech is helicopter specific, and covers both Aircraft Technical Knowledge and Principles of Flight in the one exam.

The exams for CPL Principles of Flight, and CPL Airtech (which are separate exams at CPL level), are both helicopter specific. If the exam/course you're doing is not available from the above providers, you will need to self-study these exams, or pay for private tutoring.

Note: You should always ensure when booking exams that you book for the helicopter exam, where there is a choice. If a student is intending to continue beyond PPL to obtain a CPL, we recommend doing both PPL and CPL exams together, while the subject knowledge is current. There is no restriction on which you do first (PPL or CPL) when it comes to the theory exams, but you need to have completed all the relevant level exams in order to obtain "theory credit" for PPL or CPL.

Rescue Pilots



Medical

In order to go solo, and to exercise the privileges of your licence once you're issued with one, you need to hold a Medical certificate. Medical certificates are issued by CAA approved Aviation Medical Examiners (for Class 1 and 2 Medicals) or by GP (for a DL9 Medical). From 5 April 2021, PPL holders are able to exercise a wide range of licence privileges on a DL9 driver licence medical certificate. Student pilots can use a DL9 medical for most of their training, however will need a Class 2 Aviation medical prior to sitting the PPL flight test, if they wish to obtain a full PPL.

Information on how to get a Medical, costs, and a list of approved Examiners can be found at <http://www.caa.govt.nz/medical/how-to-get-med-cert/>

A comparison of the privileges that go with the different types of medical can be found in our "Theory exam and Medical" document.

You don't need a Medical to start flight training. However if you have any doubt about your ability to obtain one, we recommend doing this early, before you spend too much money on training.

Flight Training

The final component is learning to safely control the aircraft. This is the most expensive and time-consuming part of training, but is also the most rewarding and exciting.

There is a lot of procedural information to learn, including processes for Pre-Flight Checks, cleaning the aircraft, ground handling, fuelling and adding oil, as well as the procedures for start-up, shutdown and checks to be completed during the flight. Threat and Error training (including developing Situational Awareness and decision-making skills) also have a ground-based component, but also come from practising the necessary skills in the aircraft.



Because of the intensity of this training (and some timeframes imposed by the CAA), we recommend that you have your other requirements (theory exams) complete by the time you start flying. This allows you to concentrate fully on your flying.

A typical flight lesson involves a pre-flight briefing (approximately 20 – 30 minutes), covering what's involved/expected for that flight, weather, and any other relevant information. Some flights will require more preparation, some less. The pre-flight, fuel up, flight following, and Control Tower notification procedures are then completed, and then you will go flying.

The initial few flights are kept short (typically a maximum of 45 minutes or so), as there is a lot of information and overload involved in learning an intensive new skill like this!

The post-flight debrief follows, to maximise what you get out of the flight. Then cleaning and if necessary, putting the aircraft away.

This pattern continues for much of your training! You will only pay for the flight time in the aircraft. All the other time spent is considered to be a part of the flight training process and is not charged. There are some specific requirements that have additional procedures and charges involved, but your instructor will discuss these with you as required.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why train with GCH Aviation?

GCH Aviation is an umbrella brand representing several of our operations through New Zealand and the South Pacific. These include Garden City Helicopters Christchurch, Garden City Helicopters Nelson, Garden City Helicopters Greymouth, Kaikoura Helicopters, Wellington Helicopters (operating under Garden City Helicopters Part135 Operational Specifications), Garden City Air Exec, Pacific Island Air Fiji, and Vanuatu Helicopters. It also represents the emergency air rescue and air ambulance operations of Westpac Rescue Helicopter, ROA Rescue Helicopter in Greymouth (Canterbury and West Coast Air Rescue Service), Nelson Marlborough Rescue Helicopter service, and the New Zealand Flying Doctor Service.

Together we have over three decades of exceptional aviation experience in Air Rescue, Air Ambulance, Commercial, Certified Flight Training and Tourism operations.

- Brand new 9000 square metre purpose-build facility, housing all elements of the GCH Aviation business. We have a dedicated Training Room, allowing computer access and quiet space for study, or flight training briefings.
- Most of our Rescue pilots have instructor ratings, and all our Instructors also fly Commercial and/or Rescue operations. They can pass on their extensive experience to new trainees, allowing an inside perspective on Aeromedical and Commercial flying.
- Flight Training is only one part of our operations. Train with us, and you get to benefit from our extensive experience in Commercial and Rescue services. When appropriate, students are given the opportunity to be involved in these operations.
- Our proximity to the Southern Alps (only 20 minutes flight time) means we use this challenging terrain extensively during training. We operate out of an International airport, in a Control Zone (CTR), and have a Low Flying Zone (LFZ) nearby, to maximise your experience in varied airspace.
- We have in-house Engineering support. Learn about the technical elements of your aircraft with input from our experienced Engineers.
- With our combined instructor experience we have over a century of aviation experience on tap! The varied background of our pilots provides a huge network of potential employers to CPL candidates. It also means GCH graduates know they're benefiting from that wealth of experience.
- "Field trips" – we have links to the Air New Zealand Engineering school and the Christchurch Control Tower, that allow us to enhance understanding of their operations and gain further experience.



Is it difficult to learn to fly a Helicopter?

Like any new motor skill, it can seem difficult initially. Often it just requires time and plenty of effort. It's not for everyone, and since getting a licence can be fairly expensive, our instructors will ensure you make the most of every flight. We don't believe in just flying for the sake of gaining hours, it's all about how much value you get out of each lesson.

Our instructors will tailor your flight programme to suit you, so it is a completely individualised process. All trainees must meet the same high standards, and we will work with you to get the most out of your experience. There is no substitute for "hands-on" time on the controls. Being an expert with a drone, playing computer games, or watching lots of YouTube videos will not help you with the motor skill development. However, we do recommend you do as much research as you can before you start, and before you commit to flight training.

Call us and make a time to come in for a chat. Know what's involved before you commit, and you'll get much more out of the experience!

How long does it take?

This depends on a number of factors:

- Type of Licence
- How often you train (mostly related to how much you can afford to spend!)
- How much "homework" and self-directed study you do
- Your ability to pick up new skills and retain information

If you want a helicopter licence "for fun" (see the information under "Which Licence do I need"), initially you will work towards a PPL. This is a pre-requisite for the CPL.

Although there is a minimum number of flight hours required for each licence, candidates must also meet performance standards. How long it takes each candidate to reach that standard is entirely individual, and for a PPL can vary from **55 hours flight time to 70+, while to reach required standard for a CPL, flight hours are typically 150 – 175.**

Our instructors will ensure they communicate with you if they feel you may be unable to reach the required standards, or if they think you are likely to take longer than usual to do so.

The more regular and consistent the flight training, the quicker you'll get your licence done, and the less you'll spend overall. If a candidate is inconsistent with their training, they will end up having to re-learn and go over lessons repeatedly, thus taking up more flight time.

On average, for someone who trains "full-time" (ie. Flying 4 or 5+ times per week), **a PPL can be obtained in 6 – 12 months.** For someone training part-time, it can be significantly more than that up to 2 – 3 years.

A CPL can be obtained in 12 to 18 months by someone who trains full-time, or up to the maximum timeframe of 6 years by someone who is training only part-time.

Keep in mind the legislated time limits:

Candidates have 3 years from the date of the first theory exam to get all theory exams done, then 3 years from the date of the last theory exam to complete the flight training component. This gives a total of 6 years to complete the whole process. There are some other time limits within that relating to cross-country training, however your instructor will make you aware of this if it becomes an issue.

When can I start flying?

You can start whenever you want. Most people opt to do a Trial Flight initially, to get a taste of what's involved. However for more long term training towards a licence, we recommend that candidates complete (or mostly complete) their theory before starting flight training.

Keep in mind the legislated minimum age limits that apply to certain elements:

To fly solo - 16 years old

To sit PPL flight test - 17 years

CPL flight test - 18 years

There is no maximum age limit, as long as you hold a valid Aviation medical certificate.

Commercial Tourism Pilots



Do I need to learn to fly a plane first? Or can I go straight to helicopters?

Each licence type (fixed wing or helicopter) is a separate, standalone licence. You can start learning to fly a helicopter with absolutely no flying experience. In fact, although flying planes (fixed wing) is less expensive per hour, if you plan to fly helicopters eventually, you're merely increasing the overall cost, as it's not a direct conversion from one to the other. There is some "cross-credit" available for flight time, but not much. We recommend you learn to fly on the aircraft type you want to fly in the long run.

What do I need to go solo?

Medical:

At least a DL9 (Land Transport) Medical. If you're intending to obtain a PPL, you can do most of your training on a DL9 medical. However we recommend you get the full Class 2 early on if you have any doubts about your ability to meet the medical requirements. If aiming for a CPL, get the Class 1 medical.

Minimum skill Competency/flight time:

Your instructor must be confident that you have the required knowledge and skill level to safely fly on your own. If you're flying the Robinson aircraft for training, you also must have at least 20 hours of dual flight instruction on Robinson aircraft types in order to go solo in our aircraft. This is a legal requirement. The Cabri G2 doesn't have the same 20 hour minimum requirement, however first solo will likely still require at least 10 hours of training. You will also still be required to demonstrate an appropriate level of competence before your instructor will authorise your first solo.

Robinson Safety Awareness Training:

This is a CAA approved course, involving ground and flight instruction to a specific syllabus. GCH Aviation are certified providers of this training course. This course is a legal requirement if you're flying Robinson aircraft, prior to first solo, and then every 90 days until you have a CAA licence. After you're licensed, you will be required to renew the Robinson Safety Awareness Training every 24 months (if you wish to exercise your License privileges in a Robinson aircraft).

English Language:

Your instructor must be confident that you have an appropriate grasp of both spoken and written English. A more formal assessment of your language skills will be required in order to obtain a license, but your instructor will give you details on this as required.

How much does it cost?

Please contact our office for a breakdown of training costs. Our rates are very competitive for training in New Zealand. Please note that the time you spend with your instructor outside of the flight time is not charged for.

In addition to the cost of flight time, there are additional costs (textbooks, medical, exams, flight logbook etc). These costs will be incurred at any flight training organisation, regardless of where you train.

What price do you put on the experience of a lifetime, or the training required to Live your Dream?

Can a NZ licence be converted to fly in other countries?

Yes, your NZ CPL is easily converted to an Australian CPL under the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Agreement (TTMRA). As an ICAO member state, flight training conducted in NZ can count towards flight experience requirements for FAA and JAA countries. A conversion for EASA (Europe) is possible also, with a bit more involved in the conversion process. Conversion of a PPL is a little harder, however is still possible.

Are there any restrictions on eyesight, or age?

There are specific requirements for eyesight for the issue of an aviation medical certificate. However the standards for eyesight are not necessarily as restrictive as people expect. Wearing glasses will not usually stop you getting a medical, for example. The restrictions on colour blindness have recently been reviewed and updated.

There are no restrictions on maximum age; the issue of the medical is based on the overall health of the applicant.

There are legal minimum ages however:

16 years is the minimum age for solo

17 years to qualify for a PPL

18 years for CPL

What happens when I get my CPL? What are the job prospects like?

Once you get a CPL, you can work as a pilot. The helicopter industry is typically quite hard to get into. Essentially a CPL is a “licence to learn”, and you will have to work hard to make headway.

Getting a job is difficult, and you will have to be prepared to travel away from home in search of any job that will give you an opportunity to get your start in the industry. 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. You will need to use this period of ground-based work to gain valuable experience and contacts within the industry. Getting a job is very much about who you know, being in the right place, at the right time, presenting as “employable” – competent and professional – as well as good old fashioned luck! Get to know as many people in the industry as you can, and don’t burn any bridges!

Once you get some experience (over 1000 hours or so), it may become easier to find a job. Getting to 1000 hours is the challenging bit.

Training with a Commercial operator (and not solely a flight training school), will provide the opportunity for practical hands on experience, and allow you the chance to meet more people in the industry.

Try to gain ground employment (crewman, office hand, marketing etc) push for some ferry flying and basic commercial work to build your hours.

If you’re interested in teaching others to fly, then an instructor rating may be a good option. However in many ways, it is better to build experience in the industry, before trying to teach others to fly. Instructing is also best for those who actually have an interest in teaching, and should NOT be used purely as a means to build hours. This will lead to dissatisfaction, and will be obvious to your students.

You will need to set realistic goals, decide which areas you’re interested in, and don’t let go of those goals. Remember that the only person really interested in your aviation career is you!

Commercial Operator vs. Flight training school – what’s the difference?

If you want a career as a pilot, choose to train somewhere that offers insight into, and the opportunity to help with commercial operations. Getting a job in the Commercial helicopter industry is more about who you know than what you know – take the opportunity to build relationships with people in the industry. Preferably in an environment that gives exposure to many different elements of the Heli industry.

Carpe diem – Seize the Day!

There is never a “perfect” time to start the Licence training process. There will always be reasons that it’s “too hard”. But as Lao Tzu put it... “a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step”. Take that step and call us today!



Commercial Overseas Tourism Pilots