

### **Should I be an airplane pilot before I learn to fly helicopters?**

No – there are many helicopter pilots who have never touched the controls in an airplane and have no interest in learning to fly airplanes.

### **What should I do before I begin my actual flight training in the helicopter?**

There are No prerequisites. You can begin training in the helicopter immediately with no prior experience or preparation! We offer the “Introductory Flight” so you can try helicopter flying with no further obligation. You must be 16 years old to fly the helicopter by yourself, 17 to get a Private Pilot’s helicopter license and 18 years old to get a Commercial Pilot’s and Flight Instructor’s helicopter license.

### **How many hours of flight training does it take to get my helicopter license?**

The FAA requires a minimum of 40 hours of total flight time in aircraft, including at least 20 hours of dual instruction time in a helicopter with a Certified Flight Instructor and 10 hours of solo flight in a helicopter. Most people take a little longer to learn to control the aircraft well enough to pass the FAA “practical” flight test. The national average is about 50-60 hours. Note: Pilots with airplane training need 10 fewer hours to obtain an “Add-On” rating.

### **How long will it take to receive my helicopter license?**

The answer to this is heavily dependent on your schedule, budget, and personal effort. Your personal circumstances will affect the timeframe more than anything else as our helicopter and instructors are ready and available to fly anytime based on your preferences. Our instructor pilots will create a flight training program around your personal and business schedule. If you can study and fly full-time, it might only take a matter of weeks to complete an “accelerated” flight training program. You should attempt to fly at least twice a week to make progress that is sustainable. If you train less than twice a week, it will probably take more hours in the long run to get your license as you will spend some repetitive time on issues that you have forgotten or just slipped on

### **Is a helicopter easier to learn to fly than an airplane?**

At first, it will seem more difficult to learn to control a helicopter. Helicopters have more operating parts and controls than an airplane and they are less stable than airplanes, but not less safe. Once you learn to manipulate the controls and gain a command of the helicopter. Very much like riding a bicycle – it is terribly difficult at first but suddenly it becomes instinctive and you can control the helicopter almost without thinking.

### **After I earn my helicopter license, will I need any special helicopter type ratings or additional training?**

Once you earn your rotorwing rating, you can legally fly any type of helicopter, including turbine powered helicopters or multi-engine helicopters up to a gross weight of 12,500 lbs. The flight controls work almost the same in each type helicopter. However, to safely fly a different type of helicopter, either the insurance company or your employer will require some additional training in that aircraft. Often insurance companies will require a certain number of hours of experience before you can act as Pilot-in-Command in a different type of aircraft.

### **Can we train in the winter, too?**

We train year-round and there are very few days in the year that we are unable to fly. The helicopter has an excellent cabin heater and typically, only high winds, heavy rain, lightning, or fog will ground the training process.

### **Can I rent a helicopter to fly after I get my license?**

Yes – York County Helicopters approved licensed pilot graduates may rent our aircraft for personal use, subject to our rental rules and agreement and our insurance requirements. Ask Peter or Dave about these rules and requirements.

### **Is flying helicopters dangerous?**

No, a properly trained pilot who exercises good judgment will be safe in a helicopter. If you encounter bad weather or have a mechanical problem, you can land a helicopter safely almost anywhere and immediately. Most helicopter accidents happen due to pilot error – these typically involve situations where the pilot flies into bad weather and loses visibility or where the pilot is flying too low and hits a tower, wires or some other type of obstacle. These accidents are totally avoidable by flying prudently.

### **In the event of an engine failure, doesn't the helicopter fall from the sky like a rock?**

No. A helicopter can land with no engine power using a technique called “autorotation”. As the helicopter descends, the air moving up through the rotor blades causes them to turn, providing lift, which allows the helicopter to come down at a constant and controlled rate. A large part of your helicopter training will involve learning and practicing autorotations. However, real engine failures in properly-maintained, FAA-certified helicopters are extremely rare.

### **Can I land the helicopter anywhere I want to land?**

You are able to land just about anywhere, with some common-sense and legal limitations. The FAA is most concerned about safety, so they prohibit landing in any area where your landing would represent a “hazard” to persons or property on the ground. However, if you have the property owner’s permission, the area is safe, and there are no local ordinances against landing, you may land anywhere that is safe.