

PILOT SAFETY CHECK

in flying order · speeds & specifics from the POH/AFM

Two reference lines per block. **FAR** is the regulation — 14 CFR, and it binds. **AIM** is the Aeronautical Information Manual: explanatory guidance, much of it worded as a recommendation, and *not* regulatory. Where a block has no AIM line, the AIM does not cover it.

1 · IM SAFE

am I fit to fly? — before anything else **TECHNIQUE**

- | | |
|---|--|
| I Illness — sick = no-go | A Alcohol — 8 hours minimum, under 0.04, never impaired |
| M Medication — impairing or masking? | F Fatigue — the one pilots lie about |
| S Stress — life load counts | E Emotions / Eating — upset or empty |

Run it when you wake up. Any hit = don't fly — with a known disqualifying condition or medication, staying down is a **rule**, not a preference.

FAR self-grounding is regulatory: 14 CFR 61.53; 91.17 alcohol · PHAK Ch 2

AIM 8-1-1 *Fitness For Flight* — the AIM prints this checklist itself, at 8-1-1h (guidance, not regulation)

2 · PAVE

frame every flight's risk **TECHNIQUE**

- | | |
|--|---|
| P Pilot — IM SAFE, currency, proficiency | V EnVironment — weather, wind, runway, terrain, day/night |
| A Aircraft — ARROW, AVIATES, equipment, performance | E External pressures — the schedule, the passengers, the ego |

MEMORY **TECHNIQUE** Check each letter against **written personal minimums** — set on the ground, not negotiated in the runup area.

FAR PHAK Ch 2 · personal minimums

AIM — no paragraph on point; this block is regulation only.

3 · YOUR POCKETS + ARROW

required documents — pilot, then aircraft **TECHNIQUE**

- A Airworthiness certificate** — displayed at the cabin/cockpit entrance, legible
- R Radio station license** — FCC, international operations only
- R Registration** — effective; expires 7 years after issue month
- O Operating limitations** — current AFM/POH, markings, placards
- W Weight & balance** — current data for this airplane

On you: pilot certificate · photo ID · medical (or BasicMed documents). The rest live on board.

FAR pilot: 14 CFR 61.3(a), (c) · aircraft: 91.203(a)-(b); 91.9; 47 CFR (FCC)

AIM — no paragraph on point; this block is regulation only.

4 · AVIATES

is the airplane legally airworthy today? **TECHNIQUE**

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| A Annual inspection | 12 calendar months |
| V VOR check — only for IFR using VOR | 30 days |
| 1 100-hour — when operated for hire | 100 hrs time in service |
| A ADs — complied with, recurring ones tracked | as each AD requires |
| T Transponder test | 24 calendar months |
| E ELT — battery after 1 cumulative hour of use or 50% of useful life | 12 calendar months |
| S Static system & altimeter — required for IFR in controlled airspace | 24 calendar months |

An annual can substitute for a 100-hour — never the reverse; the 10-hour overrun exists only to reach the inspection and counts against the next 100.

FAR 14 CFR 91.409(a)-(b); 91.171; 39.7; 91.413; 91.207(c)-(d); 91.411

AIM 6-2-4 *Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT)* · 1-1-4 *VOR Receiver Check* (guidance, not regulation)

CHECKRIDE TRAP **TECHNIQUE** subject only; every interval above is 14 CFR

5 • NWKRAFT

preflight action the reg actually requires **TECHNIQUE**

- N NOTAMs** — including TFRs, same-day
- W Weather** — reports and forecasts
- K Known ATC delays**
- R Runway lengths** — at airports of intended use
- A Alternatives** — available if the flight can't be completed
- F Fuel (VFR)** — first point of intended landing at normal cruise + 30 min day / 45 min night — no alternate required (that's IFR)
- T Takeoff & landing distances** — from your POH charts, every flight

FAR 14 CFR 91.103 · fuel: 91.151(a) · AC 91-92 briefing

AIM 5-1-1 Preflight Preparation · 5-1-3 Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) System · 7-1-5 Preflight Briefing · 3-5-3 Temporary Flight Restrictions (guidance, not regulation)

6 • A TOMATO FLAMES

day-VFR required equipment — § 91.205(b) **TECHNIQUE**

- | | |
|---|---|
| A Altimeter | F Fuel quantity gauge — each tank |
| T Tachometer — per engine | L Landing-gear position indicator — if retractable |
| O Oil pressure gauge — each engine using a pressure system | A Anti-collision lights — small airplanes certificated after 3/11/96 |
| M Manifold pressure gauge — per altitude engine | M Magnetic direction indicator |
| A Airspeed indicator | E ELT — per § 91.207 — not itself in § 91.205(b) |
| T Temperature gauge — liquid-cooled engine | S Seat belts — and shoulder harnesses per manufacture date |
| O Oil temperature gauge — air-cooled engine | |

CHECKRIDE TRAP **TECHNIQUE** This is § 91.205(b) **as far as the mnemonic reaches** — it has no letter for § 91.205(b)(12), the flotation gear and pyrotechnic signalling device required when operated for hire over water beyond power-off gliding distance from shore. And it is not an MEL (that's a separate FAA-approved document most trainers don't have). Inop items instead go through the § 91.213(d) flow, then get removed or deactivated **and placarded**.

FAR 14 CFR 91.205(b); ELT from 91.207 · inop items: the 91.213(d) flow

AIM — no paragraph on point; this block is regulation only.

7 • FLAPS

night VFR adds — § 91.205(c) **TECHNIQUE**

- | | |
|---|---|
| F Fuses — spare set or 3 of each kind (if the airplane uses fuses) | P Position lights — on sunset to sunrise |
| L Landing light — if operated for hire | S Source of electrical energy — adequate for installed equipment |
| A Anti-collision light system | |

FAR 14 CFR 91.205(c) · lights on sunset–sunrise: 91.209(a)

AIM 4-3-24 Use of Aircraft Lights · 8-1-6 Vision in Flight · 8-1-8 Judgment Aspects of Collision Avoidance (guidance, not regulation)

CHECKRIDE TRAP **TECHNIQUE** 4-3-24c is a voluntary program, not a rule

8 • SAFETY

passenger briefing — belts are the legal part **TECHNIQUE**

- | | |
|--|---|
| S Seat belts — fasten/release (required brief); on for taxi, takeoff, landing | E Emergency — exits, door, “follow my commands” |
| A Air vents — heat, sick sacks | T Traffic & talking — help me look; sterile on my call |
| F Fire extinguisher — location, use | Y Your questions — before engine start |

FAR belts brief + notify: 14 CFR 91.107(a) · rest: technique

AIM — no paragraph on point; this block is regulation only.

Sources. Regulatory citations verified against the electronic Code of Federal Regulations, title 14, 2026-08-27 issue, retrieved 2026-08-30. AIM paragraph numbers and titles verified against the AIM HTML edition, Basic dated February 20, 2025 with Change 3 effective July 9, 2026, retrieved 2026-08-30. Paragraph numbers move between editions — check the current AIM before relying on one.