

Common Issues for Students First Aviation Medical Exam

For most students, the process of obtaining a Student Pilot Certificate is simple and will result in the student leaving the office with the certificate in hand. For a few, it will require a slight delay while a piece of additional history or an updated report is obtained from their treating physician. For even fewer, there can be delays due to significant past or present issues. Our goal is to issue the medical certificate as timely as possible and to help students with the process of further evaluation if needed. Below are examples of unexpected problems we encounter that can be disappointing for both of us when not aware of before the doctor visit.

The aviation exam is straight forward and not to be feared! You complete your form on line at medxpress.faa.gov within 60 days of your appointment and bring the form with you. Once you submit your form online, you are unable to make any changes but we can update the form if needed or if an error has been made. At the exam, we review your form with you, perform physical exam with eye test, color vision, urine test and depending on age, an EKG for the heart. Please bring any glasses with you! First and Second Class pilots must see 20/20 vision, Third Class 20/40 vision. Students looking at aviation as a career will need to have a First Class certificate. If all good – you're done and leave with your Medical Certificate!

Most pilots are aware if they have significant medical problems that may be needed information, evaluations and reports but below are a few common problems that we encounter. This is not meant to be all-inclusive and the FAA continues to update and modify procedures. More information can be obtained at FAA.gov or by calling us. Please note that for issues that we are not able to give you your certificate and require FAA review, the process may easily take 3-9 months.

DWI

1. If more than five years ago, blood alcohol less than 0.15, and only one episode, put the full details on your form. Bring a personal statement of your past and present alcohol use, any records if still available and a copy of your state drivers record. We usually can issue.
2. If less than five years ago and blood alcohol was less than 0.15 %: We need a personal statement as to details of the episode and present alcohol use, copies of the arrest and court records, and a copy of your state drivers record. If all is favorable, we may be able to issue.
3. Here is the big section: More than one DWI ever, or within the last 5 years and blood alcohol level 0.15 % or higher. The FAA will be concerned about dependency and the ability to follow rules. This will require the above reports, a chemical dependency evaluation and all driving records from states where you have held a license. We will forward these records for review and will not be able to issue certificate.

https://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/avs/offices/aam/ame/guide/abuse_dep/

Attention Deficit Disorder

The FAA does not allow the use of any medication for the treatment of ADD/ADHD. If you have this history, you will be require to obtain specific testing after being off the medication for 90 days to demonstrate the ability to perform and learn adequately. This is a lengthy process and the reports will require review by the FAA. If this pertains to you, please contact us or the FAA, and we will forward the required evaluations needed. Note: This is not a simple note from your treating physician.

https://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/avs/offices/aam/ame/guide/dec_cons/disease_prot/adhd/

Depression/Anxiety

Of course you're anxious! You're trying to fly a plane! This section is if you have had a history of medication use (past or present) for treatment.

1. Distant past use (several years ago): put a detailed explanation on the form, bring a current status report from your physician and we will discuss. We often can issue.
2. If you are presently using the medications there are two potential options:
 - A. Discuss with your physician and discontinue medications. After 60 days, obtain current status report to include your past history with reason for use and no issues now that you are off the medication. We may need to review with the FAA but can often issue in short period of time.
 - B. If you are using approved medication (Prozac, Lexapro, Zoloft, or Celexa) and have been stable on medication for 6 or more months: you may elect to stay on the medication and obtain a special issuance from the FAA. Please call us. This is an extensive process, requires special reports and the need to see a specific aviation HIMS medical examiner.
 - C. Depression/Anxiety medications not listed above are not allowed by the FAA. History of severe depression or suicide attempt will require FAA review.

https://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/avs/offices/aam/ame/guide/app_process/exam_tech/item47/amd/antidepressants/

Marijuana/CBD/Narcotics

These are not allowed by the FAA in any usage form, no matter what your state of residence allows.

Major Medical Illness/Surgery History

Feel free to contact us early so we can discuss and try to gather needed information early. This will help keep you informed and smooth the process of certification. No need to be concerned for common items such as hernia, tonsils, appendix or ear tubes etc.

Color vision

Color vision testing is a complicated issue with regards to airman certification. If unable to pass the color vision tests, the airman may request a waiver test which, if passed, is good for life. However, if this special testing is failed, it ***cannot ever*** be retaken. The color restriction becomes permanent.

In order to obtain the testing: aviator must first complete medical exam. When ready, the aviator will request testing from the FAA. Permission will be given to local FAA office to perform color vision waiver testing.

First and Second class medical certification: requires an actual flight test with FAA examiner. The aviator being tested must fly, hence this test requires an individual to have completed many hours of flight training.

Third class medical certification: An on ground airport light test from the control tower with a FAA examiner - must identify signal red-green-white.

Below is link for FAA website that covers specifics.

Be aware that if you use an alternative test for color - you must continue to use that test. Many of the alternative tests are rare and hard to come by.

https://www.faa.gov/ame_guide/app_process/exam_tech/item52/and

Remember – it is better to be honest and upfront as to past and present issues. We can work through most issues with some time and energy. There are significant penalties for falsification (\$250,000/5 years imprisonment). We look forward to helping you achieve your goal!

Complete your form at:

medxpress.faa.gov

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