
FAR/AIM Overview

The FAR/AIM can seem incredibly daunting, and generally speaking, legal intricacies are one of pilot's least favorite parts of the job or hobby. But it's important to know the rules you operate under. We'll try to also give you an understanding of why those rules might exist.

The FAR/AIM book that most students use is two main documents: the Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs), which are the rules that govern flying in the U.S. and the Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM) which is an expansion of best practices and recommendations from the FAA. The AIM is not specifically regulatory, but often contains procedures for complying with regulations in the FARs. So, while you cannot be violated for deviating from the AIM, you can get in trouble for violating the associated FAR.

Legal Code Organization: The rules that pilots call the FARs are a subset of the overall U.S. legal code. In fact, you'll sometimes hear the FARs referred to as 14 CFR, because they fall under the 14th chapter of the legal code (Code of Federal Regulations) which is "Aeronautics and Space". 14 CFR is organized in the following way:

Chapters —>
 Subchapters —>
 Parts —>
 Subparts —>
 Sections —>

Oh boy. Fortunately, despite what the old guys at the airport tell you, you don't have to be a lawyer to be a pilot. Let's say we want to find out about medical certificates.

There's only a handful of chapters in 14 CFR, and #1 is for the Federal Aviation Administration. This is pretty much the only chapter we need. If you're planning to go to space sometime soon, we apologize for the misinformation.

There are thirteen Subchapters in Chapter 1, but we'll pick the one that deals with "airmen" (pilots). That's subpart D. You don't even have to know about all the subchapters to become a private pilot.

Now, we have six parts within Chapter 1, Subpart D. Part 67 deals with medical certificates, so let's check that out.

Subparts are broken down by class of medical. So, say we want a 3rd class medical. Subpart D.

Sections are broken down from 67.301 to 67.315 and explain the requirements that must be met to obtain a 3rd class medical.

That's it!

Now— a couple things to be aware of:

- Sections don't always start at 1 and proceed through a number sequence logically. The FAA removes sections, adds other sections, etc. which can mess with the sequence. Not a big deal once you realize that.
- There are absolutely Parts of 14 CFR that aren't in most FAR/AIM books. These include Parts like 121 which relates to airlines.

The Following Parts are recommended reading for Private Pilot Applicants

Part 1- Definitions and Abbreviations:

Part 21 - Certification Procedures for Products and Articles

Part 39 - Airworthiness Directives

Part 43 - Maintenance, Preventative Maintenance, Rebuilding and Alteration

Part 61 - Certification: Pilots, Flight Instructors and Ground Instructors

Part 71 - Designation of Airspace A-E; Air Traffic Service Routes; Reporting Points

part 73 - Special Use Airspace

Part 91 - General Operating and Flight Rules

NTSB 830 - Notification and Reporting of Aircraft Accidents or Incidents

Additionally, the following sections of the Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM) are recommended:

Chapter 2 - Aeronautical Lighting and Airport Visual Aids

Chapter 3 - Airspace

Chapter 4 - Air Traffic Control

Chapter 6 - Emergency Procedures

Chapter 7 - Safety of Flight

Chapter 8 - Medical Facts for Pilots

Study Technique —

Familiarize yourself with the FARs first. Make flashcards to help you memorize the regulations you'll need to be most familiar with. In your Dashboard Flight Bag you'll see guides for Part 61 and Part 91 which summarizes what those sections state. Make flashcards for these two sections, because a large portion of your written exam will cover these sections. The FAR questions on the written test are easy money if you study. NTSB 830 usually has a question or two, so make flashcards for that as well.

After you've familiarized yourself with the FARs, read through the AIM. Even a little bit each night can be beneficial. The additional benefit you receive is that as you spend more time navigating the FAR/AIM you'll know roughly where to look for regulations that you've forgotten.



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