

The PPL Cheat Sheet

P10 Air Law

The facts that actually get tested in the EASA PPL(A) theory exams, stripped to the bone: definitions, key numbers, formulas, mnemonics and the classic traps for each subject. Built for the night before, the commute, and the last scroll before you walk into the exam hall.

P10 Air Law

39 memory items

One of 9 subjects; the full set is free at skystudyatpl.com/ppi-cheat-sheet

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Chicago Convention, PPL(A) licensing, rules of the air, VFR minima, airspace, light signals, altimetry, ATS.

◆ VFR WEATHER MINIMA (VMC) AT A GLANCE

At or above 10,000 ft AMSL

Visibility 8 km · 1500 m horizontal and 1000 ft vertical from cloud

Below 10,000 ft down to 3000 ft AMSL

Visibility 5 km · 1500 m horizontal and 1000 ft (300 m) vertical from cloud

At or below 3000 ft AMSL (or 1000 ft above terrain), class F/G

Visibility 5 km · clear of cloud · in sight of the surface

The lower two bands split at 3000 ft AMSL or 1000 ft above terrain, whichever is higher

Speed below 10,000 ft AMSL: 250 kt IAS maximum. In class A you cannot fly VFR at all; class G gives information only.

◆ MUST-KNOW DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

- The **Chicago Convention (1944)** created ICAO and confirms every state has complete and exclusive sovereignty over the airspace above its territory.
- ICAO issues **19 Annexes**. The ones a PPL should know: **1** Personnel Licensing, **2** Rules of the Air, **3** Meteorology, **7** Nationality and Registration Marks, **8** Airworthiness, **11** Air Traffic Services, **13** Accident Investigation, **14** Aerodromes, **17** Security.
- **SERA** (Standardised European Rules of the Air, Reg (EU) 923/2012) is the EU's version of the rules of the air and applies across EASA member states.
- A **PPL(A)** lets you act as PIC or co-pilot on non-commercial aeroplane flights with **no remuneration**; carrying passengers for reward is not permitted.
- The **Pilot-in-Command** has final authority and is responsible for the safety of the aircraft and everyone on board.
- Documents carried on board: **Certificate of Registration**, **Certificate of Airworthiness**, radio licence, insurance, licence and medical, plus (as required) the flight manual and weight and balance data.
- **CAVOK**: visibility 10 km or more, no cloud below 5000 ft (or the highest minimum sector altitude if higher) and none of CB or towering cumulus, and no significant weather.
- **Controlled airspace** (classes A to E) provides an ATC service; **uncontrolled** (F and G) does not. Class A is IFR only.
- **Transition altitude** is set by the state or aerodrome (fly on QNH below it); **transition level** is calculated and varies with pressure (fly on 1013.25 above it).
- **AIP** is the primary source of permanent aeronautical information; a **NOTAM** carries time-critical information not known early enough to publish in the AIP.

- **Annex 13** accident and incident investigation exists only to prevent future accidents, never to apportion blame or liability.

◆ KEY NUMBERS, LIMITS AND VALUES

- SSR transponder codes: **7500** unlawful interference, **7600** radio failure, **7700** general emergency; **7000** is the VFR conspicuity code in Europe.
- Emergency frequency **121.5 MHz**. An ELT alerts the Cospas-Sarsat satellites on **406 MHz**.
- VFR cruising levels above 3000 ft AGL: magnetic track **000 to 179** flies odd thousands plus 500 ft; **180 to 359** flies even thousands plus 500 ft.
- Minimum height rule: **1000 ft** above the highest obstacle within 600 m over congested areas; elsewhere not within **500 ft** of any person, vessel, vehicle or structure.
- Right of way: aircraft in distress first, then balloons, gliders, airships, aircraft towing, then powered aeroplanes.
- Converging at the same level: give way to the aircraft on your **right**. Head-on: **both turn right**. Overtaking: the overtaker alters **right**; the overtaken keeps its heading.
- An aircraft on **final approach** or landing has right of way over aircraft in flight or on the ground; of two landing aircraft the **lower** has priority.
- Runway designators are the magnetic centreline bearing rounded to the nearest 10 degrees, last digit dropped (**274 becomes 27**).
- Light signals **in flight**: steady green = cleared to land; steady red = give way and keep circling; flashing green = return to land; flashing red = aerodrome unsafe, do not land.
- Light signals **on the ground**: steady green = cleared for take-off; flashing green = cleared to taxi; steady red = stop; flashing red = taxi clear of the runway; flashing white = return to the starting point.
- Alcohol: a common minimum is **8 hours** bottle to throttle, and a blood limit around **0.2 g/L** **VERIFY**.

- PPL(A) minimum age **17**; the medical needed is a **LAPL medical or a Class 2** **VERIFY**.
- Class 2 medical validity is commonly **60 months** under age 40, **24 months** ages 40 to 50, and **12 months** over 50 **VERIFY**.
- Time in aviation is always **UTC**.

◆ MNEMONICS AND MEMORY ITEMS

- Right of way pecking order **Big Gliders Are Truly Powerful**: Balloons, Gliders, Airships, Towing, Powered (a powered aeroplane gives way to all of them).
- Squawk ladder by severity: **7500** hijack, **7600** comms lost, **7700** general emergency.
- MAYDAY = Menace** (grave and imminent danger), **PAN PAN = Precaution** (urgent, not yet grave). Each is said three times.
- VMC vertical clearance below FL100 is **1000 ft**; horizontal is **1500 m**. Above FL100 add up to **8 km** visibility.
- QNH** reads height above sea level; **QFE** reads zero on the aerodrome (Field).

◆ COMMON EXAM TRAPS

- **Transition altitude is fixed; transition level changes** with QNH. Do not swap them.
- On converging tracks the aircraft that gives way is the one with the other on **its right**, not the faster or first-seen one.
- When overtaking, the **overtaking** aircraft alters right and the overtaken keeps its heading; students often reverse this.
- Powered aeroplanes give way to balloons, gliders and airships regardless of relative position.
- **CAVOK** has strict thresholds; weather just short of them is not CAVOK even if it looks fine.
- Runway numbers round the **magnetic** bearing, not the true bearing; convert first if a true value is given.
- VFR minima change **at** 3000 ft AMSL or 1000 ft above terrain, whichever is higher; do not just read the altitude.
- The **7500** code gives no aural warning at the aircraft that set it; the three emergency codes do not all behave alike.
- **APPL(A) may not fly for remuneration**. Cost sharing within the rules is not the same as paid work.

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