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Eagle Flights[®]

Mentor Pilot Handbook



Contacts and Resources

- > For general questions and more information about EAA Eagle Flights, visit *EagleFlights.org*, e-mail *eagleflights@eaa.org*, or call 800.564.6322
- > For more information about volunteer opportunities, insurance coverage, and to order additional Eagle Flights materials, visit *EagleFlights.org/volunteers*.
- > To report your Eagle's flight training milestones (solo, passed written, and pilot rating) please e-mail *eagleflights@eaa.org* or call 800.564.6322.



Visit an Aviation Museum

There are 900 aviation museums in the United States and Canada. Don't forget that your EAA membership qualifies you for free or reduced admission to more than 300 museums that are part of the Association of Science-Technology Centers Passport Program. Visit www.EAA.org/ASTC to learn more.

Attend an EAA SportAir Workshop

Weekend workshops will introduce you to the world of homebuilding and help refine the skills you need to build an airplane. Visit www.SportAir.org to learn more.

Build a Model

Build and fly a free-flight or radio-controlled model airplane together. Model building is a great winter activity and one your participant can do with the family. The Academy of Model Aeronautics is a great resource to get started. Visit www.ModelAircraft.org to learn more.

Volunteer at an Aviation Museum or Fly-In

Experience the camaraderie of the aviation community and learn more about aviation while meeting new people.

Watch a Classic Aviation Movie

Weather too bad to fly? Settle back with an aviation film. Visit www.AeroFiles.com and click on "Films and TV" for an alphabetical listing of almost every aviation film made.

Attend an FAA Safety Seminar

It's free, it increases your knowledge, and as you earn your WINGS certificates, you may save money on your aircraft insurance. Learn more at www.FAASafety.gov.

Attend EAA AirVenture Oshkosh

It is The World's Greatest Aviation Celebration. Yes, we might be biased, but nowhere else will you see the variety of aircraft, attend more forums, or meet more aviation enthusiasts than at Oshkosh each summer. Start your planning now at www.AirVenture.org.

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Prologue

EAA's founder, Paul Poberezny, was a reluctant student back in 1937. He spent much of his time in class drawing airplanes and dreaming of the sky instead of concentrating on his lessons. One day after school his history teacher, Mr. Homer F. Tangney, made a fateful decision to give Paul a slightly damaged Waco primary glider and \$67 if he agreed to fix it. Paul made short work of restoring the glider and soon had it tied to the back of a tow car. At the age of 15, he taught himself to fly.

Mr. Tangney was able to see something in Paul that others may have missed, and his generous gift and genuine interest in Paul helped set into motion a series of events that made possible all that EAA has become. Mr. Tangney passed on to Paul a love of all things aviation. Paul in turn passed on that love of aviation to thousands of us. Now you have the opportunity to pass your passion for aviation on to someone else through your participation as an EAA Eagle Flights mentor.



Aviation Activities

An introductory flight may light a spark within your Eagle Flights participant, but keeping the Eagle engaged in aviation through active participation is the key to fanning the flame. EAA members—who belong to more than 900 local chapters worldwide—annually organize more than 10,000 aviation events and activities that promote aviation safety and education, encourage innovation, and create an environment for advancing the future of personal flight. Here are some activities that you and your participant could engage in together:

Go Flying

If there is interest, invite your Eagle out for another flight. A nice morning flight to a pancake breakfast helps convey the aviation lifestyle.

Attend an EAA Chapter Function

Inviting your Eagle to an EAA chapter event or activity is a great way to introduce him or her to other pilots and aviation enthusiasts in your community and shows what the camaraderie of aviation is all about.

Volunteer With an Aviation Charity

The Air Care Alliance is a good place to find out about public service flying—whether it's patient transport, disaster relief, or environment support. You can even help save animals. Visit www.AirCareAll.org for more information.

Go Camping With Your Plane

Camping is a great way to combine some flight time with a great outdoor experience. Visit www.AACA.PilotGetaways.com for more information.



Introduction

Welcome to the next phase of EAA Eagle Flights. The program was first launched at EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2012, and we have learned a lot since then. We wanted to make sure that EAA Eagle Flights would be something that drew from the strength of EAA members and fit the realistic needs of the adult participants. The program is intended to be an informal mentoring program that helps expose adults to aviation and guides them toward whatever engagement fits their lifestyle. We hope that an Eagle Flight experience helps move them toward becoming a pilot, but most importantly, we want to nurture their interest in aviation and invite them to join our community of aviators. Some of us fly, and some of us participate in other ways, but we are all part of the same amazing community. We encourage you to take someone flying and help him or her understand your passion for aviation and EAA. By working together we can help preserve the joys of flight for future generations.

Program Goals

The primary goal of EAA's Eagle Flights is *to grow participation in aviation*. In order to achieve this goal, the program aims to:

- > Create new pilots and re-activate lapsed pilots by developing and supporting clear pathways that ignite and nurture interest in flying.
- > Strengthen EAA's position as the local access point to aviation by empowering and equipping our members with information and resources to share The Spirit of Aviation with others.
- > Facilitate the sharing of knowledge, information, and resources among Eagle Flights mentors, prospective pilots, EAA chapters, and the larger aviation community.
- > Continue building on the sense of belonging that our EAA community is founded upon.



Flight Training Milestones

To support and recognize Eagle Flights participants who are working toward their pilot certificate, EAA will recognize your Eagle for completing the following flight training milestones:

- > **Solo:** EAA will send your Eagle a certificate and letter of congratulations after completing this most memorable part of the flight training journey.
- > **Passing the written:** EAA will reimburse your Eagle up to \$175 after he or she passes the FAA Knowledge Test.
- > **Rating:** EAA will send your Eagle a personalized plaque and a letter of congratulations. All milestones should be reported to EagleFlights@eaa.org. Please include the participants name and EAA number.



Safety Culture

While those of us who fly consider the risks involved to be acceptable, a person who is new to aviation has to get used to the idea that as pilot in command you have a great deal of responsibility for the safety of yourself, your passengers, and bystanders. Help your Eagle understand how you think about managing the risks of flying to help him or her through this tough concept.

Airports and Landing Spots

As pilots, it's easy to forget how complicated or intimidating an airport can seem to a non-aviator. In addition, most people who don't fly are unaware that there are thousands of general aviation airports and landing spots throughout the United States. Take the time to explain basic airport operations as well as the variety of safe and practical options for landing an aircraft.



What Does an Eagle Flights Mentor Do?

As an Eagle Flights mentor, you are taking on the responsibility to:

- > Identify, engage, and encourage adults who show interest in joining our community of aviators and acting on their dream of flight.
- > Provide a free introductory flight experience that demonstrates the fun, freedom, and accomplishment of becoming a pilot.
- > Develop a relationship with the Eagle after his or her flight by planning and participating in aviation-related activities together.
- > Help your Eagle set aviation goals and work toward accomplishing them together. This could be as simple as helping him or her learn more about the local airport or as involved as supporting the Eagle along the path to becoming a pilot.
- > Support, encourage, and motivate the Eagle to take the "next step" by making connections to local EAA chapters, flying clubs, CFIs, and flight schools.
- > Function as a "safety net" during flight training, offering encouragement and support as needed.
- > Be willing to communicate regularly with EAA staff about program achievements, including when your Eagle completes key milestones during flight training.
- > Be willing to be contacted by adults in your area who are interested in learning more about aviation through an Eagle Flight.



Why Should I Be a Mentor?

There are many reasons to serve as an Eagle Flights mentor, but perhaps the strongest and most compelling is to pay it forward to our aviation community. For many of us, having a positive role model may have meant the difference between pursuing our dream of flying and merely wishing we had done so. As an Eagle Flights mentor, you have the opportunity to make that kind of difference in someone else's life.

Cost

"How much does it cost to learn to fly?" This is one of the most common questions that potential student pilots ask. The best way to answer this question is to put it in terms that will make sense to the prospective pilot. For example, you could explain how the cost of taking weekly lessons would be comparable to a monthly car payment. You could also compare flying to similar activities such as camping, boating, motorcycling, or golf, all of which can have comparable costs.

Time Restraints

With families, careers, and existing leisure time activities competing for your Eagle's time, the task of fitting in flying lessons or engaging in aviation altogether can take a great deal of effort. Be flexible with your Eagle's time and schedule, and don't pressure anyone into doing something he or she can't or simply doesn't want to do.



Common Barriers to Participation

Language

Often at EAA chapter meetings and even informal gatherings, new participants are excluded from the conversation because they don't understand pilot jargon. If you invite your Eagle to an aviation event, such as an EAA chapter meeting, let others know the Eagle's background knowledge and experience with aviation and encourage them to communicate accordingly.

Not Asked to Be Involved

As simple as it may sound, not taking the time and effort to make someone who is new to aviation feel welcome is one of the most crucial barriers to sustained action and participation in the community. Luckily, overcoming this barrier is as simple as asking your Eagle to get involved.

What Are the Requirements?

You are eligible to be an Eagle Flights mentor as long as you maintain your EAA membership. There is no formal training involved to become a mentor. If you decide you no longer wish to participate in the program, please notify us of your decision by e-mailing us at eagleflights@eaa.org or calling 800.564.6322.

Pilot Requirements

The requirements to fly passengers in EAA Eagle Flights are basic. You must:

- > Be an EAA member
- > Hold an appropriate airman's certificate (sport pilot or greater)
- > Possess a current medical certificate (if applicable)
- > Be current to carry passengers in the aircraft you plan to use
- > Have a current biennial flight review
- > Complete the Eagle Flights registration form prior to the flight, signed by you and your passenger
- > Conduct flights in an aircraft that is in airworthy condition
- > Have aircraft passenger liability insurance of at least \$100,000 per passenger for the aircraft used (owned, rented, or borrowed)
- > Adhere to all applicable Federal Aviation Regulations



How Will I Be Supported?

This handbook is only one resource that has been created to support you in your role as an Eagle Flights mentor. You also have access to the following tools and resources, which member feedback helped to create:

- > **Eagle Resources:** Your Eagle Flights participant will receive a complimentary six-month EAA membership after the completed registration form is received by the Eagle Flights office in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. The Eagle will also receive a monthly e-newsletter to ensure ongoing communication and support from EAA, as well as recognition and incentives for completing key milestones in his or her flight training (see page 29).
- > **Eagle Flights Appointment Cards:** Use these cards to help your Eagle remember the date and time of the flight, or jot down your contact information and post on a bulletin board to connect with an interested adult in your community.
- > **Mentor Recognition:** When you perform Eagle Flights you'll earn the recognition you deserve. You start with the official Eagle Flights patch just for signing up to become a mentor. Then, for every one of your Eagles Flights participants who becomes a pilot, you'll receive a star add-on for your patch recognizing your contribution to the aviation community.

Tips for Being an Effective Mentor

Tell Your Story

Share your personal story about your own path to becoming an aviator. Teach the things you've learned along the way. Talk about your failures and achievements. Ask questions about his or her aviation dreams.

Have Fun!

Make sure the Eagle knows flying is fun. Tell him or her about the cool things you have done and places you have gone. Don't play up the mistakes you may have made. Instead, concentrate on the good decisions and conservative choices that have kept you safe and happy.

Aim to Inspire

Relate inspiring experiences you've had in a relatable context and arrange for the Eagle to meet inspirational people in your community.

Be Positive, Yet Factual

You should emphasize the fun, freedom, and accomplishment of learning to fly. Be careful not to downplay the challenges involved while conveying a "you can do it" message.

Nip the Negativity

Treat every interaction you have with your participant as the event that could make or break that person's future as a pilot.

Be Realistic

Don't feel discouraged if your Eagle decides not to pursue a pilot certificate. Remember, not everyone will walk away from an Eagle Flight ready to begin flight training, but most will walk away with a positive experience about general aviation.

Seek the Support of Others

Becoming a pilot takes time, dedication, and commitment, and the process is made easier with the support of friends and family. Emphasize how aviation is something the entire family can enjoy and encourage your Eagle to involve friends and family as much as possible throughout the process.



- > **Insurance Coverage:** You are eligible for up to \$1 million of excess passenger liability insurance coverage if you carry a minimum of \$100,000-per-passenger liability insurance. This coverage is automatically in place for Eagle Flights, as long as the official program waiver form is used.
- > **Staff Support:** EAA has dedicated staff available to help you navigate any difficulties or provide answers to your questions. Contact us at eagleflights@eaa.org, or 800.564.6322.
- > **Flight Training Scholarships:** EAA offers flight training scholarships and other resources that will help Eagles achieve their aviation goals.



You received several Eagle Flight appointment cards in your EAA packet of materials. These are a great way to help your Eagle remember the date and time of their flight, along with your name and contact information.



_____ will take you
flying on _____ at _____
Comments:

How Do I Get Started?

Your first task as an Eagle Flights mentor is to identify a good candidate for the program. This would include any person 18 years of age or older who has **1)** expressed an interest in aviation and/or learning to fly, **2)** the time, money, and wherewithal to become a pilot, or **3)** become lapsed and may only need a little inspiration or encouragement to get back in the left seat.

The best place to start may be with your local EAA chapter. Chapters all over the country host Flying Start events. A Flying Start event is an open house style event and presentation about learning to fly, and is capped off with an Eagle Flight. Consider participating in these events, and providing the follow-on Eagle Flight. Find your nearest chapter at www.EAA.org/FindaChapter.

Once you've identified an Eagle, the next step is to extend the offer. It's important to communicate the purpose of the Eagle Flights program early on. Help the person understand why you are offering an Eagle Flight and be sure to discuss the role you envision for yourself as a mentor. This includes helping him or her identify specific goals relating to involvement in aviation, becoming active in the EAA community, or learning how to fly. It's important to have a shared vision for what each of you hopes to achieve from the mentoring partnership.

Your next step is to schedule a date and time to take an Eagle Flight. Be sure to provide clear directions on how to access the airport and/or where to find your hangar. Before you part ways, be sure to exchange contact information such as preferred e-mail addresses and phone numbers.

Flight Stage

Your Eagle has found a training method that fits and is now underway. Only about one out of four people who begin working on their pilot certificate actually achieves this goal. As a role model and supporter, you are there to keep your Eagle on track to help him or her through the inevitable rough patches that crop up during the flight training process.

Post-flight Stage

Your Eagle is now a certificated pilot or otherwise fully engaged in the aviation world. We all know pilots who no longer fly for a variety of reasons. Your final mission, as a friend, is to help the Eagle stay engaged in aviation for the long haul. One great way to do that is to make sure he or she is an EAA member and an EAA chapter member.



At a Glance: The Four Stages of Mentoring

Your role as an Eagle Flights mentor is a mix of friend and teacher. You should also serve as a motivator, guide, facilitator, role model, and supporter. Here's a brief overview of the four common stages of mentoring and how each of these roles comes into play:

Preflight Stage

This first stage is really about selling the magic of flight. Emphasize the sense of freedom and adventure flying offers and reinforce the reasons people fly. Make sure your Eagle understands the aviation opportunities that exist in your local community. Discuss options for flight training as well as ways to stay engaged as a pilot. Think of yourself as a motivator and teacher at this point, helping someone understand what aviation is all about and how to become engaged through involvement, such as membership in your local EAA chapter.

Run-up Stage

Your Eagle should be ready to make an informed decision at this point about how best to move forward. You will serve as a guide and a facilitator by introducing the participant to others in the community. This may include joining the Eagle as he or she visits the flight school for the first time, or inviting him or her to a local flying club meeting to show that it is easy to interact with other pilots. You are giving the last nudge needed to get engaged in aviation.



Useful Tips for Finding Eagles

- > Look close to home when trying to find a candidate; chances are good you have a friend, neighbor, or co-worker who has expressed an interest in your flying.
- > Appoint someone in your EAA chapter to be an Eagle Flights coordinator and task him or her with identifying and engaging prospective pilots in your community. Coordinating a chapter Flying Start event is the number one way to find qualified leads. This person should be approachable, friendly, and enthusiastic about aviation.
- > Actively promote the availability of Eagle Flights in your community. Remember, if you're trying to reach nonpilots, be sure your marketing efforts extend beyond your local airport or FBO.
- > Tap into existing community networks and organizations, such as Kiwanis International, Lions Club International, and your local chamber of commerce.
- > Set up a table or booth at a chapter-sponsored Young Eagles rally to provide information about Eagle Flights to parents. If a parent expresses interest in an Eagle Flight, we recommend arranging a time outside of the rally to conduct the flight.

Getting to Know Your Eagle

Here are some questions that can help you learn more about your Eagle and how he or she relates to general aviation:

- > Have you flown in a small aircraft before? How was the experience?
- > Why do you want to become a pilot? Has it been a lifelong dream?
- > Have you ever taken any steps toward learning to fly (for example, started ground school, soloed, etc.)?
- > Do any of your friends or family members fly?
- > What has prevented or deterred you from learning to fly?
- > What challenges do you foresee in flight training that you would need help with the most?
- > What type of flying are you most interested in doing (recreational, business travel, visiting distant relatives or friends, etc.)?





Things to Consider When Engaging Prospects

- > The person may be completely new to general aviation, so be careful not to presume he or she has background knowledge of the processes or language.
- > Keep it simple and concise. Don't turn someone off by talking about the rules, regulations, and restrictions of flying.
- > Consider keeping the conversation informal so as not to intimidate the person.
- > Give the Eagle a chance to ask questions along the way.
- > Provide enough background information about yourself to help the person make an informed and comfortable decision about accepting an Eagle Flight. This includes describing your qualifications and experience as a pilot and the type of aircraft the Eagle will be flying in.
- > Emphasize the social aspects of aviation.
- > Encourage the Eagle to bring a friend or family member to an aviation event or activity after the flight.



Guidelines for Conducting Eagle Flights

Remember that your Eagle may be nervous or unsure of what to expect when he or she shows up for the introductory flight. The person may have vague ideas and misconceptions about what it's like to fly in a small aircraft. Be friendly, reassuring, and even a bit humorous throughout the process, and always maintain a high level of trust, respect, and professionalism. The following guidelines will help you provide a safe, enjoyable flight experience.



When Does the Mentoring Relationship End?

The relationship could end when the Eagle feels he or she has reached a goal. You may also end the relationship if your Eagle simply feels uncomfortable or decides that aviation is not for him or her. If mentoring is not of value to you or the Eagle, take the initiative to end the relationship in a positive manner.

Can EAA Chapters Use a Team Approach to Mentoring?

Yes! Our chapters have been vital to the success of EAA programs that share the gift of flight with others. Each EAA chapter is unique and will ultimately put its own stamp on the program. Many chapters engage in a Flying Start event to participate in the Eagle Flight program. These events include an EAA prepared presentation, online registration software, and EAA provided marketing materials. Please be sure to let EAA know about your chapter's experience with the Eagle Flights program so we can pass the lessons you've learned to others. NOTE: You are not required to be an EAA chapter member to be an Eagle Flights mentor, but we highly recommend it.

Frequently Asked Questions

How Much Time Will This Take?

The amount of time you invest in the program really depends on the relationship you develop with your Eagle. Some of our early mentors reported friendships that have developed after a single flight. Other times you may only talk with the person a handful of times. Your mileage with the program will vary and greatly depends on what you and your Eagle need, and want, from the relationship.

Am I in Charge of the Eagle's Learning?

No. The mentoring relationship is not meant to replace formal flight training. You are simply there to be a source of local knowledge and inspiration. A mentoring partnership is a two-way street, and you should not feel any obligation to take charge for the participant.

What if I'm Not a Good Fit?

It takes courage to admit that we may not be the best for a particular job. As an Eagle Flights mentor, you are not expected to have all the answers. Mentors guide from their experience and wisdom. Guidance may include introducing the Eagle to another member who may become a mentor. Don't simply tell him or her to find someone new. Too often this will result in the person walking away from aviation with a bad taste in his or her mouth.

On the Ground

- > The Eagle Flights registration form must be completed and signed by you and your passenger prior to the flight. This form must remain on the ground during the flight.
- > Discuss what you will see and do on your flight. This may include reviewing aeronautical charts and identifying points of reference to look for during the flight.
- > Be sure to stress ramp safety, emphasizing caution around propellers and moving aircraft.
- > Conduct a preflight inspection and identify the flight surfaces that control the airplane.
- > Describe the aircraft interior and explain the operation of the aircraft door, safety belts, and shoulder harnesses (if installed).
- > Allow time to answer questions before starting your engine.
- > When starting the aircraft, go through your preflight checklist and always let your participant know what you are doing and why it's important. For example, you could explain what the mixture knob is for and why it goes full-rich for starting.
- > If you are at a controlled field, describe the communications required for your flight. Let the Eagle listen to ATIS and answer any questions about what's being said.



In the Air

- > After takeoff, let your passenger know when you are leveling off. Show how the trim tab works. If able, remove your hands from the yoke and show the stability with the trim. A common misconception is that as soon as you let go of the yoke, the airplane will fall out of the sky.
- > Allow your Eagle to become an active participant. Remember, this is about showcasing the “magic of flight.” Encourage him or her to follow through on the flight controls to get a sense for basic maneuvers like gentle climbs, descents, and turns.
- > Have the Eagle follow a landmark such as a highway or river. This gets him or her engaged with flying the aircraft rather than focusing solely on the instruments.
- > As you prepare to land, point out the airport and explain how you will enter the pattern. Talk about why you are reducing power and adding flaps.

After the Flight

- > As you exit the runway, congratulate your Eagle and ask if he or she has any questions about the flight.
- > Share your post-flight rituals—replacing maps, straightening the cockpit, and pushing the aircraft into the hangar.
- > Describe the next steps the Eagle can take on the journey to become an aviator, reaffirming that anyone can learn how to fly.
- > Inform the Eagle that he or she will receive a complimentary six-month membership in EAA, which includes six digital issues of *EAA Sport Aviation* magazine and a monthly e-mail that includes additional information on learning to fly and EAA.
- > Now is a great opportunity to talk about what EAA membership means to you. Recommend the Eagle join a local EAA chapter and invite him or her to the next meeting.
- > Be sure to send in the Eagle Flights registration form. Don’t delay!

Flight Training Checklist

Your guidance and insight of your local aviation community is invaluable. Here are a few things you should discuss with your Eagle about flight training and aviation engagement opportunities in your area:

- ☐ Local chapter with educational programing
- ☐ Local flight schools
- ☐ Local flying clubs
- ☐ Local flight instructors
- ☐ Types of pilot certificates available
- ☐ Different types of aircraft
- ☐ Flying options (rent, own, flying club or form a partnership)
- ☐ Local FAA testing facility
- ☐ Local flight examiners