EAA Flying Start
Program Handbook

Your guide
to hosting a successful
EAA® Flying Start event

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What is the EAA Flying Start Program

EAA Flying Start is a program for EAA chapters to find, educate, and inspire those adults in their community who are eager to discover aviation, but may not know how or where to take that first step.

The program consists of an EAA-prepared PowerPoint presentation and video that give the attendees information about learning to fly, with topics ranging from what is involved in flight training and which certificate would be best suited for each individual, to how much it will cost in both time and money. The hosting chapter is encouraged to customize this experience with information about their local chapter and flight training options.

Following the presentation, attendees will have the opportunity to take a complimentary Eagle Flight provided by an EAA volunteer pilot. Participants will also receive a free six-month EAA membership after EAA receives the completed Eagle Flight registration form in the mail.

Through Flying Start, participating individuals will have a pathway to get involved with their local EAA chapter, the information and guidance to pursue their interest in flying, and the opportunity to forge new friendships based on a shared passion for aviation with the potential goal of becoming a pilot.

Why Should Chapters Participate in the Flying Start Program

EAA chapters that participate in Flying Start will benefit from the program in a number of ways:

- Recruit new chapter members and engage their current members.
- Share their passion for aviation with those who have the same interest.
- Create new pilots to strengthen the general aviation community.
- Enhance the chapter's position as the local access point to aviation.

Program Goals

The primary goal of EAA's Flying Start program is to grow participation in aviation, starting at the chapter level. To achieve this goal, the program will provide the following pillars:

- A place for aviation newcomers to learn about recreational aviation and what steps they need to take to become a pilot.
- A way for local EAA chapters to grow their membership.
- Opportunities for local EAA members to share their aviation experience by mentoring program participants.
- The sense of belonging and camaraderie that is at the core of our EAA community.

Program Requirements

To host a successful Flying Start event and to ensure participants become fully engaged, the chapter should be able to provide or ensure the following:

- Chapter appointed Eagle Flight Leader.
- Availability of local flight instruction with the capability for flight instructors to meet participants during the Flying Start event.
- Volunteer pilots available to provide Eagle Flights.
- Buy-in from chapter members to engage with participants during and after the event.
- Comfortable gathering area with restrooms, and a presentation area with audio/visual equipment suitable for at least 20 participants.

Hosting a Flying Start Event

A Flying Start event is typically a three-to-four-hour chapter activity hosted at the local airport. Chapters can host the event in conjunction with a fly-in or pancake breakfast to ensure plenty of airplanes and pilots are around for questions and to volunteer for Eagle Flights.

The program is intended for adults ages 18 and up who have an interest in learning to fly and have never taken initial steps or for those looking to return to flying. Your chapter may wish to prescreen potential Flying Start participants to insure that the program will meet individual expectations.

The formal program consists of an EAA-prepared PowerPoint presentation and video that give the attendees information about learning to fly. The presentation should include dialogue from a few selected chapter members who may share their aviation passion with the group, as well as a local flight instructor who can help answer questions about the flight training process.

After the presentation and video, Flying Start participants will have the opportunity to take a free Eagle Flight provided by an EAA volunteer pilot. A free six-month EAA membership is included with their Eagle Flight. We encourage chapters to match this with a free six-month chapter membership.

Flying Start Online Registration – FlyingStart.org

To assist chapters with the planning, management, and execution of a Flying Start event, EAA provides a Flying Start online registration system (FlyingStart.org). This system will handle preregistration of event attendees, volunteer pilot invites, pre-event email communication, Eagle Flight processing, and so much more! It has become the standard for all Flying Start events.

Rather than provide an entire tutorial (those videos can be found at FlyingStart.org under the "Videos" section), this page will highlight the key benefits and requirements of FlyingStart.org.

Benefits of Using Flying Start Online Registration:

- **Easy Preregistration Tool For Attendees:** Once an event is in the system, chapters can either share the event's unique link to prospective attendees or via the home page that includes an event finder to find the closest events to a zip code.
- **Set Registration Limits:** EAA recommends that Flying Start events be limited to 10-20 attendees. This provides a more personal experience for each attendee, and easier coordination of Eagle Flights. Using FlyingStart.org allows chapter to set registration limits, registration opening/closing dates, and track registrations as they come in.
- **Volunteer Management:** One of the most critical pieces to a successful Flying Start event is having quality volunteers. This system allows chapters to invite the volunteer pilots and ground volunteers best suited to participate. Note: Volunteers must be registered for YEDay.org and/or FlyingStart.org to appear in the system.
- **Simple Attendee Check-In and Eagle Flight Assignments:** Using this system allows for quick verification of a participant's attendance. Attendees can also be paired with a pilot for their Eagle Flight. Once the attendee and pilot are paired, the flight waiver can be printed and signed prior to the flight. Following the event, once attendees have been checked-in and paired with a pilot, the event can be closed and submitted to EAA HQ. This allows for nearly instant recognition of the event, Eagle Flights, and will trigger the participants' six-month EAA membership. Note: Signed waivers are still required to be mailed to EAA HQ.
- **Additional Promotional Support From EAA:** Events that are registered on FlyingStart.org will be linked to the EAA website meaning that your event will gain more organic promotion from folks interested in finding a Flying Start event near them.

Requirements for Flying Start Online Registration

- **Chapter Appointed Eagle Flight Leader:** The chapter must have an officially appointed Eagle Flight Leader on record with EAA to create an event. That Eagle Flight Leader must also to have an account created on FlyingStart.org and/or YEDay.org. The log-in credentials for these two systems are shared.
- **Volunteer Requirements:** To invite and assign chapter volunteers, volunteers must have an account created on FlyingStart.org and/or YEDay.org. The log-in credentials for these two systems are shared. Without an account, chapters will not be able to add volunteers to events.

Requirements for Flying Start Online Registration

- **Internet Connectivity Preferred:** Although having internet connection is preferred, it is not required during the event.

Event Execution with Internet:

As participants arrive, check them in by clicking the blue ticket next to their name on the "Check-In/Print Reg." tab within the event on FlyingStart.org.

When the time comes for Eagle Flights, attendees are assigned an Eagle Flight pilot via a dropdown box on the check-in screen. Once assigned, print the flight waiver to be signed before the flight, and then mailed to EAA HQ following the event.

At the conclusion of the event, submit the event to EAA HQ via the "Final Report" tab. Reminder, completed waivers must be sent to EAA HQ.

Event Execution Without Internet:

Prior to the event, print a list of those registered for the event. This can be done by pulling the registration information from the "Check-In/Print Reg." tab.

When the time comes for Eagle Flights, participants are manually assigned the Eagle Flight pilots. Prior to the flight, both the pilot and attendees must complete the official EAA Eagle Flight registration/waiver forms. The forms are ordered directly from EAA.

When re-connected to the internet access, log into FlyingStart.org, open the event and manually check-in the attendees on the "Check-In/Print Reg." tab. Eagle Flight pilots can also be assigned at this point.

Once attendees have been manually checked in, submit the event to EAA HQ via the "Final Report" tab. Reminder, completed registration forms/waivers must be sent to EAA HQ.

The adoption of Flying Start online registration is sure to provide a more seamless registration process for attendees and ease the burden of event planning and management by the chapter.

To view the system and watch the tutorial videos visit FlyingStart.org.

Pre-event Tasks

The following checklist will help you get started in identifying all of the details you will need to consider when preparing to host a Flying Start event. Our EAA chapters department will assist you in planning your event. Please contact us at **chapters@eaa.org**.

❏ **Organize a Flying Start event committee (90-120 days prior to event)**
Having a person or team dedicated to the planning and execution of your Flying Start event will help keep event planning on track, as well as creating a group that reports directly to the chapter board on event planning progress.

❏ **Identify the facility (90-120 days prior to event)**
Ideally, the best facility will have a comfortable gathering area with restrooms and a presentation area suitable for a sit-down discussion for around 20 participants. A sound system is required for the video.

❏ **Register your Flying Start event (60-90 days prior to event)**
Register your event and create sign-up Link:
Be sure to set-up your event on FlyingStart.org, EAA's Flying Start online registration tool. This tool will allow your chapter to preregister attendees, confirm attendance, assign Eagle Flight pilots, and submit the event information to EAA HQ.

❏ **Order event materials and custom marketing collateral (45-60 days prior to event)**
EAA will send you customized marketing materials such as posters and rack cards. In addition, you can order flight training source-books from EAA to give to attendees.
Your chapter can also download the following customizable promotional materials at EAA.org/FlyingStart.
• EAA Flying Start stock press release
• EAA Flying Start social media posts template
• Aviation stock photos

Common Flying Start marketing methods:
• Young Eagles parents who expressed a sincere interest in aviation
• Word of mouth by chapter members
• Bulletin board at local businesses (grocery store, diner, barbershop, etc.)
• Social media / create a Facebook event page
• Local news media (TV, radio, newspaper)
• Online event calendars, including EAA's calendar of events
• Local newsletters

❏ File for EAA event insurance (30-45 days prior to event)

Complete an EAA event insurance form at least 30 days prior to your Flying Start event date. There is no additional cost for EAA-provided insurance. Apply for insurance online at **EAA.org/ChapterInsurance**.

❏ Develop an event operating plan (30-45 days prior to event)

The day of your Flying Start event will consist of many moving parts. Creating an event operating plan will help to ensure every aspect remains on track, as well as making it easier to coordinate with volunteers and event committee members. Consider the following tasks while planning your event. (30-45 days prior to event)

- **Setup**
  Ensure all supplies and audio/visual equipment are set up and ready to go before the official start time of the event as some guests may arrive early.

- **Chapter Greeter**
  Having a designated chapter greeter at your Flying Start event is a great way to ensure all guests are properly greeted and feel welcomed at your event.

- **Event Signage/Car Parking**
  Adequate signage will help attendees find the event, especially those who are unfamiliar with the airport layout.

- **Information Booth/Table**
  Consider setting up an information table to provide take-home information for the participants. Items such as local flight instruction brochures, aviation magazines, and EAA chapter membership information are all good materials to offer.

- **Safety briefing to volunteer pilots and ground crews**
  Ensure all aircraft are marshaled in and out of parking spots. In addition, have flightline volunteers wear safety vests so they are easily spotted from the cockpit.

- **Identify and confirm Eagle Flight pilots**
  These volunteers should be personable, upbeat, and excited to introduce newcomers to flight. This task can be completed using Flying Start online registration (FlyingStart.org)

- **Post-flight engagement with participants**
  Part of the success of your Flying Start program is to keep participants engaged and moving toward the goal of successfully learning to fly.

Outline of Flying Start Event

Typical Event Agenda

- Meet-and-greet – welcome guests as they arrive
- Presentation and video
- Classroom Q&A
- Meet the pilots/assign aircraft
- Provide Eagle Flights
- Post-flight engagement with participants

Check-In/Meet-and-Greet

Having a designated chapter greeter is a great way to engage with guests as they arrive, provide them a name tag, inform them about your chapter, and invite them back for future events and chapter meetings.

If your chapter is using Flying Start online registration (FlyingStart.org), be sure to check-in the attendees, so their attendance is confirmed in the system.

Presentation and Video

The EAA-prepared PowerPoint presentation and video will provide attendees with information about learning to fly and EAA.

Contents of the PowerPoint presentation:

- Flying Start mission
- Program outline:
    - Who is EAA?
    - Why learn to fly?
    - What to fly?
    - What does it take to become a pilot?
    - Flight training process
    - Flight instruction – meet local flight instructors
    - Aircraft access
    - Cost
    - What's the next step?
    - Experience the magic - Eagle Flights

Classroom Q&A

Allow time for questions generated from the presentation.

Meet the pilots/assign aircraft

The local volunteer pilots participating in the event should provide a background on who they are and how flying fits into their lives. They can share with the participants the passion they have for flying and how it has positively affected them. Assign participants to an airplane for their Eagle Flight based on the style of flying and type of aircraft that appeal to them most. Explain the differences in the types of aircraft complexity and performance.

Provide Eagle Flights

Spend time with each participant to educate them on the operation of the aircraft and explain to them what you will be doing during the flight. If using Flying Start online registration, be sure to assign each attendee to a pilot and print the waiver forms. These must be signed prior to the flight. If the chapter uses the traditional two-sided Eagle Flight forms, be sure to complete and sign both sides prior to the flights. Whichever method is used, the forms must be mailed back to EAA HQ.

Membership to EAA and Your Chapter

Flying Start participants will receive a free six-month EAA membership with their Eagle Flight. Your chapter should consider providing a free six-month chapter membership to match the EAA membership.

If a participant doesn't take an Eagle Flight, he or she can still receive a free six-month EAA membership through the chapter. That membership can be found at: www.EAA.org/ChapterTrial

Post-event Checklist

❏ **Thank Your Volunteers**

The chapter leadership should make a special effort to acknowledge the efforts of all of the members and flight instructors who worked to make the Flying Start event a success. Thank-you letters, newsletter mentions, and a personal thank you will go a long way toward making your volunteers feel appreciated.

❏ **Event Debrief**

Ask these three simple questions:
- What worked?
- What didn't work?
- What should we do differently next time?

This is valuable information that should be documented for the planning of your next Flying Start event!

❏ **Follow Up with Participants**

Follow up with Flying Start attendees to ensure they received their free trial membership with your chapter and EAA. Also be sure to invite them back to future chapter events.

❏ **Close event and submit final paperwork to EAA**

If your chapter used Flying Start online registration, be sure all attendees were checked in and assigned an Eagle Flight pilot. Once these steps are completed, close the event and mail the waivers to EAA HQ.

If your chapter used the traditional two-sided Eagle Flight forms, mail them to EAA HQ. You should also send a follow-up email to EagleFlights@eaa.org confirming your event and the number of attendees.

Summary

Often, the only live exposure the media and general public have to general aviation is at a local EAA chapter event. Your event will help define the image of the entire aviation community.

A chapter-sponsored Flying Start event can be one of your most visible, and rewarding, EAA activities. It can serve the aviation community and strengthen chapter spirit and camaraderie.

During the planning process for your upcoming Flying Start event, please do not hesitate to contact the EAA chapters department with any questions or concerns you may have at **chapters@eaa.org**.

Have fun, be safe, and *good luck!*

Anatomy of a Flying Start Event

1. Hang Flying Start entrance banner
2. Easy auto parking
3. Welcome area with food & drinks
4. Restrooms
5. Classroom-style area for presentation
6. EAA & chapter information materials
7. Flight training information
8. Flying Start materials
9. Aircraft viewing/Eagle Flight
10. Post Eagle Flight engagement

Notes

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