



FAA A&P Certificate Checklist

Step-by-step guide to get your FAA Airframe & Powerplant (A&P) Certificate in the United States

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FAA — Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 65

For Foreign Mechanics

AME / EASA / Latin American Licences

This checklist was created by a holder of the FAA A&P certificate with 18 years of international experience, also licensed in South America and Canada (AME M1/M2). The FAA A&P process is more accessible and faster than most people think — especially if you already have aviation experience. Follow this checklist step by step.

→ What Is the FAA A&P Certificate?

The FAA Airframe & Powerplant (A&P) certificate is issued under **14 CFR Part 65** and authorizes you to perform and approve aircraft maintenance in the United States on civil-registered aircraft. It is one of the most recognized aviation maintenance credentials in the world — accepted or respected in many countries as proof of technical competence.

Airframe (A) Rating

Covers the aircraft structure, systems and components (fuselage, flight controls, hydraulics, avionics, landing gear, etc.)

Powerplant (P) Rating

Covers aircraft engines (piston and turbine), propellers, engine-related systems and accessories

Recommendation: Always pursue **both Airframe AND Powerplant** together. A combined A&P certificate is the industry standard and gives you full authorization. Getting only one rating significantly limits your employability.

STEP 1 Choose Your Eligibility Path — There Are 3 Options

Path A — FAA Approved School

Graduate from an **FAA-approved Aviation Maintenance Technician School (AMTS)** under 14 CFR Part 147.

School provides all required hours and training records.

Typical duration: 18–24 months full time.

Path B — Work Experience

Demonstrate **30 months of practical experience** on both airframe and powerplant systems (or 18 months for each separately).


Must be documented and verifiable civil aviation experience.

Best path for experienced international mechanics.

Path C — Military Experience


Present proof of military aviation maintenance experience equivalent to civilian A&P requirements.

Contact your local **FSDO** (Flight Standards District Office) to evaluate your military records.

 **For international mechanics with experience: Path B (Work Experience)** is usually the fastest route. If you have 30+ months of documented civil aviation maintenance experience on aircraft systems — you may qualify to go directly to the oral and practical tests without attending a full school program. This is the path many experienced foreign mechanics use.

STEP 2 Confirm Basic Eligibility Requirements

- Be at least **18 years of age** at time of application.
- Be able to **read, write, speak and understand English** — this is a mandatory FAA requirement. The oral exams and practical tests are conducted in English.
- Have a valid government-issued photo ID.
- Note: You do **NOT** need to be a US citizen or green card holder to obtain an FAA A&P certificate. Foreign nationals can and do obtain it regularly.

 **Important:** You can start studying and preparing for the FAA A&P exams from your home country. The written tests can be taken at FAA-authorized testing centers worldwide. You do not need to be living in the USA to begin the process.

STEP 3 Contact Your Local FSDO (Flight Standards District Office)


- Find your nearest **FAA FSDO** at [faa.gov/about/office_org/field_offices/fsdo](https://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/field_offices/fsdo) — this is the FAA office that will evaluate your eligibility and authorize you to take the tests.
- Contact the FSDO to discuss your specific eligibility path (school, experience, or military).
- If using **Path B (Experience)** — bring documentation of your aviation maintenance experience for FSDO review and approval before booking exams.
- Ask the FSDO for the **Form 8610-2** (Airman Certificate and/or Rating Application) — you will need this for your application.

STEP 4 Study For and Pass the FAA Written Knowledge Tests

- There are **3 written (knowledge) tests** required for the full A&P certificate:
 - **General (AMG) — 60 questions** — covers general knowledge: electricity, mathematics, weight & balance, regulations, publications, physics and tools
 - **Airframe (AMA) — 100 questions** — covers airframe structures, systems and components
 - **Powerplant (AMP) — 100 questions** — covers engines, propellers and related systems
- Minimum passing score for all three tests: **70%**.
- Tests are taken at **FAA-authorized testing centers** (PSI or similar) — can be taken in any order.
- Written test results are valid for **24 months** — complete all 3 tests and the practical exams within this window.

Keep your written test result certificates — required for your application.

Test	Questions	Passing Score
General (AMG)	60 questions	70% (42 correct)
Airframe (AMA)	100 questions	70% (70 correct)
Powerplant (AMP)	100 questions	70% (70 correct)

 **Best Study Resources:**

- **ASA Test Prep books** (Airframe, Powerplant, General) — the gold standard. Contains actual FAA question pools.
- **Prepware app** by ASA — mobile practice tests, mirrors actual exam format exactly.
- **Jeppesen AMT Series** textbooks — for deeper technical understanding.
- **FAA Handbooks** (free at faa.gov): Aviation Maintenance Technician Handbook — General, Airframe, Powerplant.

STEP 5 Pass the Oral and Practical Tests

After passing all 3 written tests, you must pass **Oral and Practical Tests** administered by an **FAA Designated Mechanic Examiner (DME)**.

There are separate oral and practical tests for:

- General
- Airframe
- Powerplant


The oral test covers regulations, procedures and technical knowledge — conducted entirely in **English**.

The practical test requires you to **demonstrate specific maintenance tasks** hands-on — refer to the **Mechanic Practical Test Standards (PTS)** document for the exact task list (available free at faa.gov).

Find a **DME (Designated Mechanic Examiner)** through your FSDO or the FAA DME locator tool online.

Bring to your practical test:

- Written test result certificates (all 3)
- Government-issued photo ID
- Completed FAA Form 8610-2 (signed by FSDO or authorized instructor)
- Logbook or experience documentation (if Path B)
- Examiner fee (paid directly to DME — typically \$400–\$700 USD per rating)

 **Important:** The practical test is conducted in **English only**. The DME will ask you technical questions orally and observe you performing actual maintenance tasks. Prepare your English technical vocabulary thoroughly — especially for engine run-up, system operations, and regulatory questions.

STEP 6 Submit Your Application and Receive Your Certificate

- After passing all oral and practical tests, the DME will complete **FAA Form 8610-2** and submit it to the FAA on your behalf.
- The DME issues you a **temporary certificate** immediately after passing — valid for 120 days while the permanent certificate is processed.
- Your **permanent plastic A&P certificate** is mailed to your address by the FAA Airmen Certification Branch within 60–120 days.
- Verify your certificate is correct (name, ratings) — report any errors to the FAA immediately.
- Your A&P certificate **does not expire** — it is valid for life as long as you do not have violations. However, you must meet **currency requirements** to exercise inspection authority (IA).


Good news: The FAA A&P certificate has **no expiration date**. Once issued, it is yours for life. You can always verify your certificate status at the FAA Airmen Inquiry website: amsrvs.registry.faa.gov

🕒 Realistic Timeline Overview

Path / Phase	Estimated Time
Path A — FAA Part 147 school (full program)	18–24 months
Path B — Experience route: document 30 months of experience	Already done if you have the experience
FSDO evaluation and authorization	2–6 weeks
Study and pass 3 written knowledge tests	1–4 months (focused study)
Schedule and pass oral and practical tests	1–3 months (DME availability)
Temporary certificate (same day after passing)	Immediate
Permanent certificate by mail	60–120 days

💰 Estimated Costs (Path B — Experience Route)

Item	Estimated Cost (USD)
Written knowledge tests (3 tests × ~\$175)	~\$525
Study materials (ASA Test Prep books + Prepware)	\$80–\$150
DME oral and practical fees (General + Airframe + Powerplant)	\$800–\$2,000
FAA application fee	No fee
Total estimated (Path B)	\$1,400–\$2,700 USD

 **Pro Tip — Path B for experienced mechanics:** If you have 30+ months of verifiable civil aviation maintenance experience on both airframe and powerplant systems, Path B is dramatically faster and cheaper than attending a full Part 147 school. The key is having your experience properly documented and verifiable. Your FSDO will review your logbook or experience records before authorizing your tests.

Key FAA Regulations to Know

- 14 CFR Part 65** — Certification of Airmen (the regulation governing the A&P certificate)
- 14 CFR Part 43** — Maintenance, Preventive Maintenance, Rebuilding and Alteration
- 14 CFR Part 91** — General Operating and Flight Rules (airworthiness standards)
- 14 CFR Part 145** — Repair Stations (if you plan to work at an FAA-certified MRO)
- FAA Order 8900.1** — Flight Standards Information Management System (FSIMS) — the inspector's reference

After you get your A&P — What you CAN and CANNOT do:

- You CAN perform and return to service maintenance work on civil aircraft under your certificate.
- You CANNOT perform annual inspections on aircraft unless you also hold an **Inspection Authorization (IA)**.
- IA requires 3 years as a certificated mechanic, 1 year active as A&P, a fixed base of operations, and passing an FAA written test. It is renewed annually.

Created by an FAA A&P | AME M1/M2 | 18 years of international experience

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This guide is for informational purposes only. Always verify current requirements directly with the FAA at faa.gov and your local FSDO.