

# 10 Things You Need to Know

## About Choosing Your PA46 Flight Instructor

All PA46 flight schools and instructors are not the same. It is up to you to be proactive in choosing a school and a specific instructor to fulfill this critical role in your life. Here are the ten most important things to consider:

- ✓ 1 - An experienced PA46 instructor is, by far, the most important consideration. Be sure you get an instructor who:
  - has the relevant experience to give you the all important high altitude and weather related training, thoroughly and safely. Look for a minimum of:
    - at least 1 type rating
    - at least 250 hours per year of flight instruction given in the PA46
    - 1,000 hours night flight
    - 2,000 hours turbine time
    - 3,000 hours actual instrument time
    - 4,000 hours in the PA46
    - 5,000 hours flight instruction given
    - 6,000 hours cross-country experience
    - 7,000 hours total time in fixed wing aircraft

Stay away from subcontractors, part-timers and inexperienced instructors, many of whom cannot meet your insurance contract's open pilot warranty. Be sure to ask for a current resume which reliably documents this important experience requirement. Do not consider any organization that won't identify the individual instructor or provide an instructor resume prior to committing to the training.

- is willing to travel on your behalf and help you with pre-purchase consulting, inspection activity, and relocation service world-wide.
- asks you for a certificate of insurance with a waiver of subrogation. This is standard practice for all professional flight schools. This practice allows your insurance broker and underwriter the opportunity to know who is providing the training and it helps to protect your interests.
- is insured for liability and property damage, including your aircraft. Be sure this coverage includes the PA46 because turbine powered aircraft and pressurized aircraft are typically excluded from non-owned and instructor policies. The instructor's policy should be primary insurance so that your coverage is secondary. Ask for a current certificate of insurance from your instructor to document this essential coverage.
- is willing to come to you, so that you can train at home, in the environment you will be encountering most often.
- has the equipment necessary to produce a professional training program on schedule, in any environment, anywhere in the world.
- has the patience and ability to give you the repetition you need to gain confidence.

- is willing to spend the majority of the training time in and around your aircraft, flying in the kind of weather environments that you are most likely to encounter in the future.
- actively serves the aviation training community on a volunteer basis, such as:
  - FAASTeam membership at the local level
  - FAASTeam National Industry Membership
  - Teaching at aviation safety seminars on a regular basis
  - NAFI (National Association of Flight Instructors) Master CFI qualified
  - A leadership role in one or more safety related aviation organizations
  - Producing and publishing books, DVDs, videos, magazine articles and other informational items on a regular basis

All of these things are indications that your instructor enjoys teaching and coaching pilots and has a genuine interest in making aviation safer.

- ✓ 2 – A well organized PA46-specific training syllabus: Look for a PA46 program which is FAA Industry Training Standards (FITS) approved and FAA Wings approved. It should be in its current form for at least the past 5 years. Ask to see a copy of the training course outline (TCO) which is derived from the syllabus. All PA46 training organizations and instructors should have one and they should be happy to share it with you. The TCO should be centered on the use of your aircraft for all training because there is no other device that will give you the specific environment you need to learn effectively. Use of an ATD (aircraft training device) should be limited to BAC (basic aircraft control) drills. Proper use of your aircraft for training must include CPT (cockpit procedures training). Review the TCO and verify that 85% or more of your initial training time is spent in and around your aircraft (50% for recurrent training). Since nearly all pilots are instrument rated and current in single engine land aircraft, most training plans should not require BAC drills or the use of an ATD.
- ✓ 3 - Reliable pre-training assessment: Your trainer should use a validated diagnostic tool, such as a risk assessment survey to measure what training is needed specifically for you. The survey should have an established minimum score threshold to identify candidates who may require pre-delivery training. A custom TCO can be prepared from the risk assessment survey and provided to your broker. This assessment may help your broker save you money by providing a detailed training plan to the underwriter with the request for quote.
- ✓ 4 - Training to proper standards – You want an instructor with experience evaluating pilots; one who know what standards to emphasize. You should only consider a trainer who will help you meet the highest standard which can be achieved in the time allotted; but no less than that which will result in the issuance of a certificate of completion for the program and endorsements for the BFR and an IPC in accordance with FAA standards. If you are unable to meet the minimum FAA standards for any reason, your instructor should be able to construct and implement a remedial program which ensures your unmitigated success.
- ✓ 5 - Training to advanced (ATP) standards: I encourage you to identify a program which offers you an opportunity to train to ATP standards. The ATP is a safer pilot by a wide margin. The advanced program should require three things of you upon successful completion:
  - Consistently meeting or exceeding ATP standards in both knowledge and skills
  - A commitment to operate within the limits of established PA46 Standard Operating Procedures
  - A commitment to train on a 6 month schedule

- ✓ 6 – You should only consider a program providing excellent materials such as these:
  - a make-model specific Pilot Information Manual
  - a weight/balance plotter
  - a pilot reference library in DVD format
  - video excerpts from your training flights which will help you learn new procedures
  - PA46 specific SOPs (standard operating procedures)
  
- ✓ 7 - Excellent training methods such as these should be included in any program you consider:
  - A world class website dedicated to training PA46 pilots
  - Formal classroom training with live video demonstrations to illustrate systems and techniques.
  - Expanded walk-around exercises which will reinforce systems learning and introduce real-world pre-flight activity
  - Cockpit Procedures Training (CPT) for an effective introduction to you specific PA46 panel and systems. The CPT method is also very effective for the development of concise checklists, flows and memory items
  - Familiarization flights one-on-one to learn the characteristics of the PA46 aircraft and to discover proper pitch/power/configurations
  - IFR procedures brief and flight - iterated as needed to achieve consistent results
  - Line Oriented Flight Training (LOFT): cross-country flights which take advantage of the real world - discovering weather avoidance, physiology, Fuel and alternate planning and putting it all together (including emergency scenarios) until the desired comfort level is reached
  - Full-motion FTD training as an option: A good instructor will know, based on your pre-training assessment survey, whether or not you need BAC drills in an FTD (a flight training device which incorporates full motion) to develop or improve basic flying skills. Pilots meeting the PA46 course prerequisites will ordinarily not require this training; however any program you consider should offer full-motion FTD training as an option. I recommend you train exclusively in your own aircraft one-on-one with a fully insured, experienced PA46 specific flight instructor. You will learn faster and retain skills longer.
  
- ✓ 8 - Post-training evaluation and assessment (PEA) and a plan for the future: A Self Evaluation Survey is the best way to correlate the pre-training survey and your instructor should be using this method. It will help you recognize the areas where additional emphasis may be needed. This highly successful method is preferential because not every pilot can get the information and skills they need in the same amount of time. Your instructor's evaluation should be based on the same validated diagnostic tool and these scores should be compared and agreed upon. Recommendations for future training should always be given. If remedial training is needed in order to meet FAA

minimum standards, your instructor should be able to create a plan for successful completion of that training during the PEA.

- ✓ 9 - Consistent follow-up: The instructor you choose should be proactive by contacting you at regular intervals throughout the years to check on your progress, answer questions and to encourage you to train at least twice per year.
- ✓ 10 - Around-the-clock mentor: excellent training + excellent mentoring = safer pilot. Your instructor should actively encourage you to call at anytime whenever advice is need. You should seek an instructor who will offer you an opportunity to train two or more times per year. This is proven to be effective at reducing the number and severity of PA46 accidents.

If you follow this advice, I am certain you will get the excellent training you need and deserve. You will, gain confidence and be a better, safer pilot.

*Fly Safely - Train Often*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard W Rochfort". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Richard W Rochfort, ATP, CFII  
Master Instructor  
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