



LIFELINE PILOTS
the shortest distance between home and hope

VOLUNTEER COMMAND PILOTS

Command Pilot Manual

Procedures and responsibilities

Revised June 2026

LifeLine Pilots
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SECTION 1

Welcome to LifeLine Pilots

Our mission is to coordinate free air transportation, through volunteer pilots, for passengers with medical or humanitarian needs far from home. Without you, the volunteer pilot, we could not exist. Thank you for making the commitment to offer your unique skills to help others, and to assist us reach our vision of a world where every person has equal access to transportation for healthcare and humanitarian needs.

LifeLine Pilots coordinates service following these principles:



SECTION 2

Safety Above All Else!

When you sign up for a flight, you provide a great service for your passengers. This includes the responsibility of ensuring a safe trip. Please make safety your priority. Safe flights start with managing expectations and attitudes. Keep in mind: You should never feel pressured by anyone to fly if conditions do not meet your minimums. Never feel compelled to accept any particular flight, fly or continue to fly in the presence of doubt about safe completion, or cut any corners to complete a mission. Every flight for LifeLine Pilots should be enjoyable for pilots and passengers.

Postponing or canceling a flight is considered a demonstration of good judgment and will never be questioned or criticized.

SECTION 3

Becoming a Command Pilot

As a LifeLine Pilots Volunteer Pilot, you can make a life-changing impact for children and adults with medical or humanitarian needs far from home. Signing up is easy!

Requirements:

- 18 years of age or older
- Hold a current FAA medical certificate or qualify under BasicMed
- Have a minimum of 250 PIC hours
- Able to provide proof of insurance

The first step is to complete our pre-qualification form. Visit our website at lifelinepilots.org and find the application under the [Pilot](#) tab. As part of the application, you will be asked to review and affirm our standards. Yearly you will renew this affirmation. A copy of this document can be found at the end of this manual.

If you qualify, your application will be accepted by Mission Coordination and you will receive an email with your member number, a link to our virtual bulletin board, VPOIDS, and instructions for setting up a profile.

You will need to upload these documents to your profile before you can be designated as a Command Pilot and begin accepting flights:

- Photo ID (driver's license or passport)
- Proof of aircraft insurance (declaration page with expiration date)
- Headshot for badge photo (any selfie is fine)
- Proof of PIC hours (logbook)
- Most recent flight review (logbook endorsement or WINGS completion)
- Certificate of completion for the AOPA Air Safety Institute course [Public Benefit Flying: Balancing Safety and Compassion](#)

Mission Coordination will receive notice as each document is uploaded. After they have been verified, you will receive notice of your status upgrade to Command Pilot. Now you can begin signing up for flights. If you have difficulty accessing VPOIDS, you can bundle the documents into an email and send them to missions@lifelinepilots.org.

Once you are an official Command Pilot, you may register for a [Compassion call sign](#) with the Air Care Alliance. Application for and use of the call sign is not mandatory. Before your number is assigned, a LifeLine Pilots staff member must verify your status with our organization.

SECTION 4

Volunteer Pilot Organization Information Database (VPOIDS)

LifeLine Pilots uses an online database system known as VPOIDS for communicating with our members and for facilitating flight coordination. Your first step will be to create a profile log in.

Follow this link to the [VPOIDS login page](#). Select the link below Login to create a new profile. You will need your Member Number, your last name, and zip code you provided in your application. Your Member Number will be found in the email acknowledging your application. Choose your username and password.

After logging in, on the landing page to the left there are Account options. To begin uploading documents or to set or change your preferences, click Update Profile.

Member Documents

After choosing Update Profile, you will see a page with many boxes. Four down to the right is where you will Add your Member Documents. As you upload the documents, Mission Coordination will receive emails, alerting them to a change in your status. They will examine and approve your documents, moving you one step closer to Command Pilot status.

Availability

Below Member Documents is Availability. Fill this out before vacations or during periods of time when your plane is unavailable. Make sure to include a start and end date.

Aircraft

On the left-hand side is a box marked Aircraft. You can enter and delete the models, tail numbers, and features of aircraft available for your use. Please specify the primary aircraft.

Online Training

Applicants and Command Pilots who have set up a VPOIDS profile will have access to our online training site. A series of short videos has been developed to help you through the procedure of taking your first flight. These videos will also provide instruction on how to use VPOIDS to select flights and the completion of mission reports following flights. The link to access these videos available here:

[LifeLine Pilots Training Videos](#). Use your VPOIDS login to enter the site. You are required to complete these before signing up for flights but can revisit them at your convenience.

Requesting a Flight

VPOIDS landing page displays a map showing routes of flights currently seeking volunteers. Clicking on the bubbles will provide basic information about each flight. You can choose to display it as a list. The list can be viewed in three different modes, each with varying amounts of information. Advanced Mode will order the flights by efficiency using the location where your aircraft is based.

When you find a flight that fits, click Request This Mission. You will receive an email confirming your request, but you will not be assigned the flight until a Mission Coordinator accepts your request.

Alternatively, you can email Mission Coordinators at missions@lifelinepilots.org, you can call the office between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at 800-822-7972, or text the after-hours cell phone at 309-369-1559. Mission Coordinators will be happy to discuss any special requests or answer any questions.

Mission Coordinators will accept your request and email a flight itinerary containing passenger and connecting pilot information, if relevant. You can see your future, pending, and past flights by clicking My Flights in the menu on the left.

Filing a Report

The menu on the left shows an option to File Mission Report. You'll come here after you have completed a flight. Here you will record nautical miles flown and Hobbs time. You can leave comments and upload photos. Please make sure to include your repositioning miles and time. If you flew multiple legs in a single flight, you only need to fill out one report. Mission Coordinators will take care of the extra reports.

Flights are tax-deductible and VPOIDS will provide a Year-End Report to be included with the filing. Please consult your tax preparer for further instructions.

If you do not complete your mission report before the first several days of the following month, Mission Coordinators will estimate your mileage and Hobbs and complete it for you. If you make a mistake with a report, let Mission Coordinators know. They can edit them at any time.

Other VPOIDS Functions

VPOIDS is in a constant state of upgrade. If you experience issues or outages, let us know so that we can report it to the administrator. Each bug or glitch is a step towards increased efficiency!

SECTION 5

Completing a Flight

Contacting the Passenger/Linking Pilots

In this manual, a *LifeLine Pilots passenger* (or *LLP passenger*) is a person LifeLine Pilots has referred for transport, along with any approved companion or caregiver traveling with them. This is distinct from a guest, helper, or mission assistant you arrange yourself. The responsibilities and standard of care described here, and the commitments in the Pilot Affirmation, apply to LifeLine Pilots passengers.

Passengers are screened to assess their need as well as their capability of flying on a small, unpressurized plane. They must be able to provide a signed release from a physician or authority familiar with their condition or circumstance. Mission Coordinators rarely meet the passenger in person and must rely upon phone calls and electronic communication when making the decision to fulfill the request.

Adult passengers are allowed to bring one companion/caregiver. Children may be accompanied by two caregivers. We strive to keep individual weights under 300 lbs. and total weight to less than 450 lbs. Luggage is limited to 40 lbs. for all passengers, packed in soft-sided bags. Medical equipment must be disclosed and described before flights are scheduled. Exceptions to the limits may occur.

Flights are set up with a maximum distance of approximately 1,000 NM, split into legs of 300 NM or less. Many of our flights have more than one leg. If you are flying a single leg mission (not a linked mission with other pilots), contact the passenger directly and as soon as possible. Passengers can get anxious when they do not know a pilot has been assigned to their flight.

If you are flying a linked mission and are the pilot completing the first leg, you are designated as the lead pilot and will coordinate times with the other pilots. You will also be the first point of contact for the passengers. In any spot of a multi-leg flight, it is best to contact the pilot(s) for the other leg(s) as soon as possible for coordination purposes.

When contacting passengers:

- Reiterate the information provided on the itinerary (e.g. weights, equipment, # of passengers, contact information).
- Identify the meeting point. Be very specific. Most passengers are not familiar with general aviation and FBOs.
- Describe your aircraft and tail number.
- Describe yourself and ask the same of the passengers. You should have a LifeLine Pilots badge and/or logoed apparel.

- It is important to remind passengers that flight planning is based on the information provided to LifeLine Pilots. Changes to numbers and weights of passengers and baggage may not be able to be accommodated.
- Ask the passenger if they have plans for ground transportation at their destination.

LifeLine Pilots does not provide ground transportation. All passengers are informed of this in advance and must make their own arrangements. Pilots are not obligated nor expected to provide ground transportation.

Cancellations and Changes

Flights may need to be cancelled or changed for different reasons including mechanical issues, scheduling, and, of course, the weather. If a passenger contacts you to cancel, please refer them to Mission Coordination.

You are strongly encouraged to cancel a flight whenever you feel a situation warrants it. Safety is our top priority. You must refuse a flight and contact Mission Coordination if, upon meeting a passenger, you feel they cannot enplane or deplane safely because of physical limitations, or the passenger weight limitations are exceeded or the baggage size or weight is exceeded.

Please inform Mission Coordination - It is essential that LifeLine Pilots' staff are aware of any and all cancellations and changes. Mission Coordinators are your best source for information and support.

Mission Coordination Contact Information

- Monday – Friday - 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. – 800-822-7972
- Email – missions@lifelinepilots.org
- Cell phone – Evenings and weekends - call or text – 309-369-1559

Please keep Mission Coordination updated as to any changes in flight status.

Liability Waivers

Each passenger must sign, or have a parent or guardian sign, a liability waiver. LifeLine Pilots collects them electronically. You will be informed of the waiver status when you receive the itinerary.

In some cases, if a passenger is not electronically savvy, we will include an electronic form which you can have them sign with a finger on your tablet or phone. When you save it, it will automatically attach to the passenger's profile. In the rare event that a passenger can only sign a paper form, please make sure to have the form as well as an addressed, stamped envelope. The form must be signed and mailed, or placed with someone who will mail it, before departing. This waiver protects all of us from legal action connected to the flight. Please see the copy of our liability waiver at the end of this manual.

Compassion Call Sign and ADS-B

The [Compassion call sign](#) should only be used when LifeLine Pilots' passengers are on board. Although ATC is not required to give you priority, many pilots find they get very good service. It can also be useful for obtaining fuel discounts and getting ramp and landing fees waived. This designation will be assigned by the ACA and will begin with CMF.

If your aircraft is ADS-B equipped, you must make sure the Flight ID being broadcast matches the call sign that you entered in your flight plan. If your transponder does not allow Flight ID changes, you cannot use the Compassion call sign. Letting ATC know you are a LifeLine Pilots' flight can often accomplish the same goal.

Mission Photos

The LifeLine Pilots Liability Waiver includes a section where passengers initial their approval for photos to be taken and their likeness to be used in promotional materials. Please take and submit many photos. Seeing the passengers' smiles is always gratifying. You can upload photos when you complete your mission report (see above, under VPOIDS), or you can email or text them to Mission Coordination.

Renewing Your Membership

VPOIDS will send out four reminders as your renewal date approaches. Renewing your LifeLine Pilots' membership is easy: sign in to your VPOIDS profile and go to the Membership Status section. If you are due to renew, you will be able to select this option. You will be prompted to update your preferences and to sign the Pilot Affirmation, which is included at the end of this manual for reference.

SECTION 6

Passenger Service

Passenger Safety and Comfort

LifeLine Pilots often carry first- or low-time general aviation passengers. These passengers may have concerns and fears and need some knowledge and personal management to ensure their comfort and safety. To ensure the passenger's safety and comfort, the pilot should:

- Introduce general aviation to first time passengers. The time spent providing a general explanation about flying to a passenger while doing an abbreviated walk around will often assuage a passenger's concerns and fears. One media-induced misconception from both television and movies is that if the engine was to stop an aircraft would immediately go into an almost uncontrollable dive. A short light-hearted explanation that an airplane operating without an engine is simply a short-winged glider can often abate that misconception and minimize any nervousness.

- Manage your passengers on the ramp. Passengers often don't know about the dangers that airplanes present (like invisible spinning props). Escort your passengers to and from your aircraft, making certain that everyone is under control. This is especially important with children. Make certain that your engines are shut down prior to enplaning/deplaning and manage your passengers so they remain clear of other aircraft, whether the engines are operating or not.
- Complete a thorough passenger briefing. A good briefing includes explaining seat belt and shoulder harness operation, operation of entry doors and emergency exits, location and use of survival equipment, life jackets, vests, and fire extinguishers, the use of oxygen masks as well as what the passenger should and should not do during the flight. From an operational standpoint, the passengers should be briefed on how to use headsets (and where to place the microphone), the intercom (if equipped), the pilot's preferred hand signals, and so forth. Pilots should be prepared to communicate with passengers who are blind, deaf, or those who speak a language other than that which the pilot speaks. For deaf passengers, ensure paper and pen are available. Mission Coordinators will prepare you for this, should it occur.
- Seat belts on all passengers. Seat belts must always be worn. Young children and infants **MUST** be in appropriate FAA approved car seats and these seats **MUST** be attached to passenger seats and oriented correctly for the age of the child and type of seat. No child seat should ever be attached to a front seat.
- Sterile cockpit as required. Passengers should be told that from engine start through the climb to cruise altitude is considered a "sterile cockpit" time where the passengers should only speak to the pilot if there are personal problems or issues or to assist the pilot (e.g. pointing out other aircraft). The same "sterile cockpit" rule should apply from the pilot's specified point on the descent to the destination through engine shut down. The pilot should explain to the passenger(s) how they should get the pilot's attention if they do have a problem or issue and should notify the passenger when it is appropriate to speak freely.
- Monitor weather conditions. The pilot should continue to monitor weather conditions throughout the flight, especially if weather conditions warrant. The pilot should use FSS, and/or onboard satellite weather. If there are any questions regarding the weather, the pilot should create an alternate strategy, which may include returning to the departure airport, diverting to an alternate, or holding for the weather to clear. If the weather makes a successful completion of the flight questionable, the pilot should discuss the weather and the options with the passengers and, together, agree to an alternative strategy. Remember, however, that the pilot in command has the final decision. A safe conclusion to any flight is the ultimate goal.
- Monitor fuel usage & requirements. During the flight, the pilot is expected to continually monitor fuel consumption and remaining fuel. This becomes even more important if there are weather or other issues that may require a diversion or holding.
- Monitor your passenger's condition. Being constantly aware of your passenger's condition can mean a great difference in the success of a flight. If your passenger is uncomfortable for

whatever reason, it is the pilot's responsibility to initiate an action. Often that will mean nothing more than providing fresh air or changing to an altitude that is smoother. However, if the passenger is physically uncomfortable, it might mean diverting to another airport or returning to the departure airport. In extreme cases where the passenger's condition might be life threatening, it might require declaring an emergency and flying directly to an airport located near suitable medical facilities. If you encounter a questionable situation, declare an emergency and land as soon as practicable.

- **Flight Instruction.** Flight training while LLP passengers are on board the aircraft is prohibited. This can give the passenger the impression that the pilot is unaware of how to fly the aircraft. You may take a flight instructor or student along as a Mission Assistant, but they can only instruct or be instructed on the dead-head leg. Additionally, please use care when communicating with another pilot in the right seat. Chatter about the "right" way to do something, casual comments about safety and other inappropriate comments can make a passenger uncomfortable or frightened.

SECTION 7

Pilot Responsibility

The Eight Deadly Flying Sins

Studies by the AOPA Air Safety Institute and other organizations have identified a finite set of causative factors that lead to most accidents with injuries and fatalities. The Institute's Richard G. McSpadden Report (formerly the Joseph T. Nall Report) consistently finds that pilot-related causes account for most general aviation accidents and fatalities. If a conscientious pilot avoids the following traps, it minimizes the likelihood of an accident:

- **Fuel mismanagement.** Fuel mismanagement, which is running a tank dry through exhaustion or starvation, remains one of the most common and most preventable categories of general aviation accident. It is almost always avoidable with disciplined fuel planning and in-flight monitoring.
- **Overloaded and/or out of CG.** General aviation aircraft are reasonably limited in terms of payload and CG. Each aircraft's documents contain the aircraft's official "weight and balance" table so the pilot can ensure the aircraft as loaded is safe to fly. An overloaded aircraft doesn't perform at POH performance values, the stall speed is higher than normal, and an aircraft that is out of CG can be uncontrollable.
- **High density altitude operations.** All pilots should always be aware of the performance robbing effect of density altitude. Density altitude is an insidious danger because it doesn't have to be particularly hot for it to have a major impact on an aircraft's takeoff and climb performance, especially at heavy weights.

- **Takeoff and landing accidents.** Takeoffs and landings account for a large share of all GA accidents, and landing is consistently the single phase of flight with the most accidents. Fortunately, these are less often fatal than accidents in other phases. Wind and turbulence, unextended landing gear, and loss of control are common hazards of airport operations.
- **Maneuvering accidents.** Low-altitude maneuvering flight has long been one of the leading sources of fatal GA accidents. Although its share has declined in recent years, maneuvering accidents remain disproportionately fatal, especially when low-altitude maneuvering is combined with marginal weather.
- **Continued VFR flight into IMC.** Continued VFR flight into instrument conditions is frequently fatal for non-instrument-rated pilots; in some recent years, every such accident was fatal. Instrument-rated pilots are not immune; pressing into severe weather has claimed them as well.
- **Controlled Flight into Terrain (CFIT).** CFIT accidents are usually attributed to IFR operations, but CFIT accidents also happen during VFR operations, especially at night.
- **Must complete the flight mindset.** Also referred to as get-home-itis. Pilots of all ratings and hours have succumbed to the desire to complete the flight and ended their flights in a tragic way. Beware and do not fall into this trap.

Potential Risky Mindset

LLP pilots are subject to all the Eight Deadly Flying Sins listed above, but the one that may be most compelling to a LifeLine pilot is the last one, a pilot's desire to complete a flight in the face of risk. After all, an LLP mission isn't just a personal flight; it is a flight to help someone in need. The pressure to complete the flight might come from some of the following motives:

- Carrying an unknown person as passenger. It is sometimes more difficult to disappoint a stranger than someone you know.
- Awareness of passenger's personal needs. As volunteer pilots, we want to help our passengers. The more we know about the person and their needs the more we want to make sure we deliver them to their destination.
- Signed up for the Mission. Pilots have a strong personal motivation to complete what they start. When a pilot signs up for a mission, it is their nature to complete the mission.
- Personal obligations afterward. If a pilot has personal obligations after a mission, there will be pressure to complete the mission.
- Proximity to the Destination. The closer the aircraft is to the destination, the greater the desire to complete the flight.
- Expectation Bias. Acting according to strong belief or mind set towards something expected to be seen or heard.
- Complacency. A state of self-satisfaction leading to unawareness of potential dangers.

Priorities in an Emergency

Many accidents are the result of a series of incidents, mistakes, or bad decisions; otherwise known as a safety chain. Often, all it takes to stop an accident is for one of the links in the chain to be broken. The best way to do that is to always make good decisions. But if there is a problem or issue, there are some things that can be done to mitigate the risk.

- With any problem or issue, the pilot must fly the aircraft first.
- Know emergency procedures for the aircraft. Use emergency checklists when available.
- Use ATC as well as your passengers to identify a landing site, provide directions, read a checklist, find a frequency, whatever is necessary.
- If the problem warrants, the pilot should DECLARE AN EMERGENCY. That ensures you can do what you need to do without endangering other aircraft, and you will have 100% of ATC's focus and assistance. Pilots are often reticent to declare, but every pilot needs to understand that when the situation warrants, declaring an emergency shows sound decision making and good judgment.
- As difficult as it sounds, forcing yourself to remain calm and talking through the problem and solution can keep you from fixating.
- Finally, as the old saying goes, runway behind, fuel left on the ground and altitude above are all worthless, so keep those in mind as you plan and fly any flight. Additional altitude can, for example, make an acceptable off-airport landing location accessible and additional fuel can take the stress out of a hold vs. divert decision.