

Welcome to Colorado Highland Helicopters

To Prospective Students: How Colorado Highland Helicopters can be a great choice for you.

Beginning education to prepare for a new career can bring up a lot of questions for yourself and your family. CHH wants to help you feel comfortable knowing that you have a good understanding of not only the process to becoming a commercial helicopter pilot but how CHH can fit into that process.

The FAA requires that any prospective helicopter pilot start by earning a private certificate which, on average, consists of 40 to 60 flight hours plus ground instruction. From there, a minimum of 150 flight hours are required (including ones accrued while earning a private) for a commercial certificate. This allows the pilot to work for hire. Other items for full completion include a FAA check ride/exam and pilot physical and other tests that may be utilized by a flight school. A traditional pathway to this certificate typically begins with a large school utilizing small piston aircraft and flight instructors that just obtained their commercial certificate who will be low time pilots with as little as 200 hours of flight time.

CHH differs from these large schools in several ways that can be beneficial for your career.

CHH begins with the use of a turbine aircraft (more power, more performance and more things to learn!) and start to finish instruction with our Chief Pilot who has had a career in instruction, air ambulance, search and rescue among others. He is an experienced high elevation mountain terrain pilot and who is FAA compliant in over 10 aircraft to include fixed wing. Instruction with our Chief Pilot is at your own pace. Rather than being part of an academy setting your flight hours and ground school will be tailored to your time frame and your success. More time can be spent polishing areas until comfortable. Time off for your personal life can be accommodated.

Instruction takes place at high elevation, in and around Durango Colorado, which allows every hour of flight time to be logged as mountain time; setting you apart from other students. Mountain Time is coveted by pilots and is a necessary prerequisite for many employers. While many flight schools advertise that they provide "mountain training", be conscientious while researching. Often schools without access to significant mountainous terrain will explain that they provide mountain training due to performance limiting factors alone. The type of aircraft they operate are already performing near their limitations. A slight increase in elevation and/or temperature or simply limiting the power available manually can simulate the power limited conditions of mountain flying. It is important to note what is missing here: real mountains. Flying in actual mountains is not just time logged over 5000 feet density altitude but truly beneficial experience for a pilot. Only by flying in the mountains can you learn to prepare for best outcomes by understanding not just performance limitations and power management but also mountain terrain and weather, snow pack landings, avalanche conditions, supplemental oxygen use and the unique physiological and psychological aspects of high elevation flying.

Due to our high elevation starts in Durango and terrain over 14,000 feet accessible within 15 minutes of flight from the airport, CHH operates a turbine MD500C aircraft that was built to perform in these conditions. Thus, the student will be safer and able to learn more

by doing more. CHH also serves Southwest Colorado by performing search and recovery missions and forhire contracting. Time is of the essence in any emergency situation and the student will have the opportunity to be in the cockpit and learn first hand as these missions arise.

While mountain and turbine time will improve your success as a pilot, it is recommended that some piston time be acquired to make the student well-rounded. CHH can help you obtain piston time with any number of flight schools operating Robinson or Schweitzer aircraft in a location that suits you.

While learning to fly a turbine rather than a piston aircraft can be more expensive for a student initially, your knowledge and experience should set you apart from other new pilots competing for better jobs. Learning to fly a helicopter is comparable to a college degree in cost and nondegree seeking student loans are available. An attached addendum to this letter will help to clarify how and where you can apply for these loans.

CHH wants to help individuals develop a plan for their success. Please contact us throughout your process with any questions.

Respectfully,

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