

Personal Minimums

Personal minimums refer to a pilot's set of procedures, rules, criteria, and guidelines for deciding whether and under what conditions to operate an aircraft. We each bring a unique mix of experience, knowledge, skill and proficiency to the cockpit, and operations that are perfectly safe for one pilot may be quite hazardous for another. So how do we decide what is safe for us? According to the FAA, personal minimums should be set to provide a solid safety buffer between the pilot skills and aircraft capability **required** for the specific flight you want to make, and the pilot skills and capability **available** to you through training, experience, currency or proficiency.

Step 1 – Review Weather Minimums

Step 2 – Assess Weather Experience and Personal Comfort Level

Step 3 – Consider Winds and Performance

Step 4 – Assemble Baseline Values

Step 5 – Adjust for Specific Conditions

Step 6 – Stick to the Plan!

Personal Minimum Strategies:

- **Document and consult** – It's not enough to just document personal minimums, you should consult them before each flight.
- **Anticipate** – Ask yourself what factors might affect your trip.
- **Be honest** – Are you comfortable completing the flight?
- **Don't gamble** – Avoid internal or external pressure to decrease your minimums.
- **Carry the contract** – Take a copy of your personal minimums contract with you on each flight.
- **Proficiency** – Update your personal minimums regularly to reflect your current proficiency level in the aircraft type you will be flying.
- **New rating** – If you have recently earned a new certificate or rating, ask you instructor to help you determine a reasonable baseline to match your new skills.

