

Part 103 ultralight vehicles

A general reference from Fly For Less Aviation

What this document is

This is a general educational summary of publicly available regulatory text. It is not individualized advice, a flight manual, an inspection, or a determination that a person may fly or that an aircraft is airworthy or legal to operate. It does not decide that a reader is ready to fly or that a particular vehicle is suitable.

Document revision date: 5 October 2026. This revision removes the cost examples, action-plan scoring, and links to calculators that were in the previous file. Those are not part of this document. The unpowered weight sentence was corrected on the same date to follow section 103.1(d).

Source check: on 5 October 2026 the regulatory points below were compared with the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations page for 14 CFR Part 103. That page was marked current as of 1 October 2026, and Title 14 was marked last amended 29 September 2026. Checking that page is not a review of any particular aircraft or of the aircraft pages on this website, and it does not keep this summary current after the regulation changes.

Read the regulation

14 CFR Part 103, Ultralight Vehicles:

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-14/chapter-I/subchapter-F/part-103>

Section 103.1, as stated on that page, describes an ultralight vehicle as a vehicle that is used or intended to be used for manned operation in the air by a single occupant, for recreation or sport purposes only, and without an airworthiness certificate. For an unpowered vehicle, it states that the vehicle weighs less than 155 pounds. For a powered vehicle, it states an empty weight of less than 254 pounds, excluding floats and safety devices intended for deployment in a potentially catastrophic situation; fuel capacity not exceeding 5 U.S. gallons; a maximum calibrated airspeed at full power in level flight of not more than 55 knots; and a power-off stall speed of not more than 24 knots calibrated airspeed.

Other sections in the same part address inspection of the vehicle to determine whether Part 103 applies (103.3), waivers (103.5), certification and registration (103.7), hazardous operations (103.9), daylight operations (103.11), right-of-way (103.13), congested areas (103.15), certain airspace (103.17), prohibited or restricted areas (103.19), flight restrictions designated by notice (103.20), visual reference to the surface (103.21), and flight visibility and cloud clearance (103.23). Section 103.23 includes a table that depends on airspace. Use the current table in the regulation rather than a secondary copy.

Subjects to discuss with a qualified flight instructor

The items below are general subjects. They are not a finding that someone is ready to fly, and they are not a finding that an aircraft is suitable. A qualified flight instructor is the person to discuss training with. Questions about a particular vehicle, a document, or a legal requirement may also belong with the manufacturer or another relevant specialist.

- Whether a specific vehicle meets section 103.1, using that vehicle's own documents.
- Training that fits the vehicle, before attempting to fly it.

- The current text of Part 103, including where a vehicle may be flown.
- Seeing and avoiding other aircraft, and yielding the right of way.
- Daylight, visibility, and cloud-clearance limits in the current regulation.
- Manufacturer documents for that vehicle, including any operating limitations the manufacturer states.

Fly For Less Aviation publishes this summary as reference reading. It does not provide flight instruction, an inspection, or a compliance determination.