

## THE MOTOR GLIDER OPTION

As the U.S. pilot population ages—and as student starts and completions continue to lag—much has been made of the FAA’s sport pilot certificate as a way older pilots no longer eligible for a medical certificate can continue to fly as pilot in command (PIC). Basically, as long as someone who has never been denied a medical certificate and holds an FAA sport pilot certificate or higher has a current driver’s license and is serving as PIC of an aircraft meeting the light sport definition, no medical certificate is necessary. This has allowed many pilots no longer able to obtain a medical to keep flying (and has boosted the prices for so-called “legacy” LSAs, like the Aeronca Champ and Piper J-3 Cub). But LSAs aren’t the only powered aircraft one can fly without a medical: motor gliders qualify, also, and you don’t even need a driver’s license.

This happy outcome is a result of the ways in which gliders are defined and certificated by the FAA, coupled with the longstanding lack of a medical requirement to fly them. And, yes, a glider with self-launch capability—also known as an engine—is still a glider.



Grob G-109 motor glider



Eiri-Avion PIK-20 motor glider