MSFS 2024

PRIVATE PILOT LIFE

QUICK START GUIDE

Everything you need to install Private Pilot Life, take your first flight and know what to expect. For the full story, see the Private Pilot Life User Manual and your Aircraft Manual.



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CHAPTER 1

PRIVATE PILOT LIFE IN TWO MINUTES

Private Pilot Life runs alongside MSFS 2024 and puts you in the shoes of a private pilot, flying an airplane that remembers everything you put it through.

HOW IT WORKS

- **Real failures, no warnings.** Nothing pops up to tell you something is wrong. Just like in a real airplane, you find out from the symptoms: RPM dropping, a needle that stops moving, an airplane that keeps pulling to one side.
- **Failures have causes.** Carb ice driven by real-world weather, water in the fuel, an abused engine, flaps lowered above VFE, a hard landing, parts wearing out with age… and now and then, plain bad luck.
- **An airplane with a memory.** Failures stay until they're fixed, wear keeps adding up, and the fuel and oil you leave in the airplane are still there the next time you fly.
- **A preflight that matters.** Sump and stick the tanks, check the oil, the tires and the pitot tube. Whatever you miss on the ground has a way of showing up in the air.
- **A maintenance shop and, if you like, a budget to manage**, whether as an aircraft owner, a flying club member or a charter operator.
- **A debrief after every flight**, so you understand what happened and become a better pilot.

THREE GOLDEN RULES

1. **Always start your flight from Private Pilot Life** (the Start Flight button), with MSFS already running.
2. **The failure simulator works silently** in the background for the entire flight. There is no window to watch, and you can even close Private Pilot Life and it keeps running.
3. **Once you're on the ground with the engine shut down, click End Flight.** That's when the flight is saved, the logbook is updated and your debrief is generated. Closing MSFS also ends the flight cleanly.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Private Pilot Life never modifies any MSFS or aircraft files. It talks to the simulator through SimConnect, Microsoft's official interface for add-ons.

SUPPORTED AIRCRAFT

For now, the **Cessna 152**, either the default one that comes with MSFS 2024 or WBSim's freeware C152, which offers the most complete experience. Its Aircraft Manual covers the differences between the two and walks through each failure: what you'll notice and what to do about it.

CHAPTER 2

INSTALLATION AND MSFS SETUP

Run one installer, change four MSFS settings once, and you're good to go.

INSTALLING PRIVATE PILOT LIFE

1. Run the installer you downloaded from privatepilotlife.com and accept the license agreement. No administrator rights are required. Windows SmartScreen may block it the first time: click **More info**, then **Run anyway**.
2. Launch **Private Pilot Life** from the Start menu (or the desktop shortcut). Your careers and flight history are stored in **Documents\Private Pilot Life**.
3. Aircraft: the **Cessna 152 that ships with MSFS 2024** is all you need. **WBSim's freeware Cessna 152** (installed in your Community folder) offers the most complete experience.

ONE-TIME MSFS SETUP

Where	Setting	Why
Settings → Controls	Bind your yoke or stick, rudder pedals, throttle and mixture **in MSFS itself**	Failures that affect the flight controls work through these bindings.
Settings → Graphics	Display mode: **Full Screen** (borderless) or Windowed, never exclusive full screen	Visual effects (hypoxia, carbon monoxide) are overlaid on the MSFS window.
Settings → Assistance → Failure and Damage	Aircraft Stress Damage **off**; Crash Damage on	Private Pilot Life models structural damage itself, in far more detail.
World Map → Conditions	Weather: **Live** (recommended)	Carb icing depends on real-world humidity.

> **IMPORTANT**
>
> If your controls are bound in a third-party tool such as Axis and Ohs, flight control failures will have no effect. Bind them in MSFS.

CHOOSING YOUR LEVEL OF REALISM

Set it with one click on the app's **Options** screen:

- **Casual**: a few rare failures, no wear on the airplane, no preflight traps. A great place to start.
- **Standard**: the core realism, without the pilot effects or preflight traps.
- **Realistic**: everything turned on.

You can also switch off individual categories (icing, pilot effects, weight and balance…). Your choices are saved in the **Custom** profile.

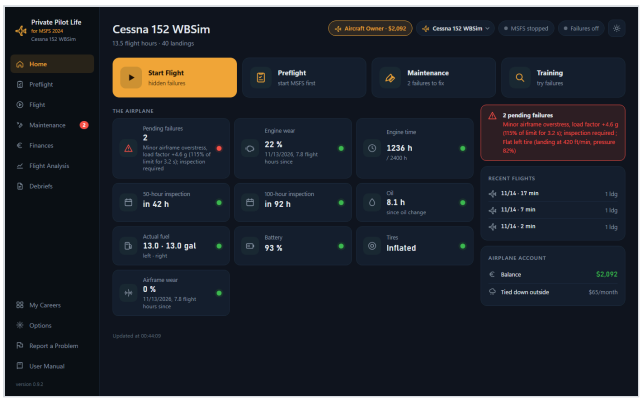
FLYING WITH OR WITHOUT A BUDGET

The **My Careers** screen offers three careers you can run at the same time: **aircraft owner** (monthly budget, hangar, insurance, maintenance), **flying club member** (you pay by the hour, and the club maintains its three airplanes) and **charter operator** (discovery flights and passenger charters). Each one has its own finances and its own airplane, with four difficulty levels. If you just want to explore without worrying about money, choose **Sandbox**.

CHAPTER 3

YOUR FIRST FLIGHT

A single trip around the pattern is all it takes to see the whole cycle: preflight, flight, debrief.



The home screen: the four main actions up top, your airplane's condition shown as color-coded cards, reminders on the right.

BEFORE YOU FLY

1. Launch **MSFS** and load the **Cessna 152** (the default one or the WBSim version) at a parking spot, cold and dark.
2. Open **Private Pilot Life**: the home screen shows the condition of your airplane.
3. Click **Preflight** and do your walkaround (see below).

THE PREFLIGHT

Click an item on the airplane, or in the checklist on the right, and a drawing shows you exactly what you would see. You do everything by clicking, just as you would by hand:

- **Wings**: click the fuel cap to open it, click the filler neck to stick the tank (the only reading you can trust: the C152's fuel gauges are notoriously inaccurate), and click the quick-drain to take a fuel sample. Don't forget to put the cap back on!
- **Oil**: click the yellow oil filler cap, then click its handle to pull out the dipstick.
- **Tires, pitot tube, exhaust, propeller, cabin**: inspect, touch, add air.

Anything shown in orange needs attention. When you're done, click **Finish Preflight**.

THE FLIGHT

4. Click **Start Flight**. Nothing pops up: the failure simulator runs in the background. In the top-right corner, the status indicator switches to Failures Armed as soon as your airplane is detected.
5. Fly as you normally would. Private Pilot Life stays quiet; it just watches.
6. After landing and shutting down the engine, switch back to Private Pilot Life and click **End Flight** (the same button you used to start).

> **FORGOT?**
> Closing MSFS also ends the flight cleanly; it's saved and debriefed like any other.

CHAPTER 4

AFTER THE FLIGHT

The debrief explains, the shop fixes, and the logbook keeps track of everything.

THE DEBRIEF

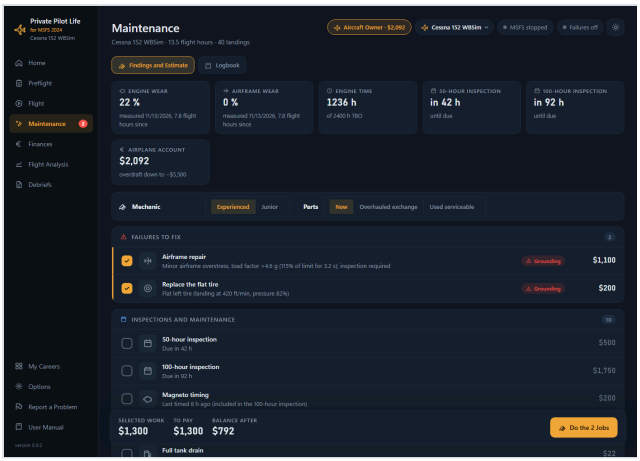
It opens automatically when the flight ends: **badges** (complete preflight, smooth landing…), a **timeline** of the flight, **what went well** and **what to work on**. For each event, it tells you what happened, why, and what you could have done differently. It doesn't grade you; it explains.

MAINTENANCE

Failures to fix, your mechanic's recommendations and routine maintenance are laid out as an estimate where you select the work you want done:

- **Grounding**: the airplane is not airworthy. If you fly it anyway, that flight is noted in the logbook, and your insurance won't cover it.
- **Can wait**: you can still fly, but the problem may get worse.
- Choose your **mechanic** (experienced, or junior: cheaper, but more likely to miss something) and your **parts** (new, overhauled exchange or used serviceable).
- **50-hour and 100-hour inspections** catch hidden problems.

Maintenance is done with the failure simulator stopped; MSFS doesn't even need to be running.



Maintenance: mechanic and parts at the top, the estimate line items with their tags, the total at the bottom.

THE LOGBOOK AND FLIGHT ANALYSIS

The **logbook** (a tab in Maintenance) records every flight, every shop visit and every fuel purchase, and can be exported to Excel. The **Flight Analysis** screen plots the entire flight second by second: RPM, temperatures, fuel, airspeed and more.

TRAINING MODE

Want to try a failure without waiting for it to happen? Click **Training**. A screen opens with a command box (the commands are listed in the Aircraft Manual) and a live readout of everything the failure simulator is monitoring. Typing **e0** fixes everything instantly.

CHAPTER 5

GETTING HELP

Answers to the most common questions, and how to report a problem.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I can't see the visual effects.

MSFS is probably running in exclusive full screen. Switch to borderless full screen. The effects only show up while MSFS is the active window.

Flight control failures have no effect.

Your controls are bound outside MSFS. Bind them under Settings → Controls.

My fuel gauges don't match what I put in.

That's by design: the C152's float-type gauges are inaccurate. Only a dipstick reading is reliable.

The engine runs rough in cold weather.

Cold oil means oil pressure runs too high. Warm the engine up on the ground before going to full power, and preheat it during your preflight.

The Start Flight button doesn't work.

Either a flight is already in progress (the button then reads End Flight) or, as a club member, the airplane you booked isn't available. Book another one on the Club screen.

REPORTING A PROBLEM

1. In the app, choose **Report a Problem** from the menu.
2. Describe what happened: **when** it happened, what you were doing and what you expected.
3. Select the flights to include, then click **Create Report**.
4. A **PrivatePilotLife_rapport_....zip** file appears on your desktop. Email it to contact@privatepilotlife.com or send it as a direct message on Discord. Nothing is ever sent automatically.

LEARN MORE

- **Private Pilot Life User Manual**: the app, the preflight, maintenance, money, the flying club and the options.
- **Aircraft Manual**: the C152 as modeled in Private Pilot Life, with its procedures, its preflight, every failure, maintenance prices and Training mode commands.

Both are in the Start menu under Private Pilot Life, and on privatepilotlife.com. The Pilot Manual button in the app opens the User Manual.