

Piper PA-16 Clipper Model Guide

The Piper PA-16 Clipper is a four-place, tailwheel, single-engine piston airplane built in 1949 and 1950. It is a lengthened PA-15 Vagabond with a rear seat and a Lycoming O-235-C1 engine. It is steel-tube and fabric, with no flaps and a basic panel. Registry data for the PA-16 and PA-16S family show range of up to 260 nm.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Carries four on 108 hp: 1,650 lb normal-category max weight and 750 lb useful load, leaving 570 lb for people and bags with full fuel.
- Pilot report: about 105 knots cruise at 6.2 gph, about 600 fpm loaded climb, and 30 gallons of fuel for about 4.5 hours to dry tanks.
- Gentle on grass and in landings, but an uncoordinated stall can cause a vicious rolloff and a loss of several hundred feet.
- Check brake adjustment first: one owner blamed a ground loop on poorly adjusted brakes.

WHAT TO CHECK WHEN BUYING

Check brake adjustment and tailwheel steering. The aileron cables are exposed and the tail is wire-braced. The fuselage-tank gauge is hard to read. The rear seat is a steel-tube-and-fabric hammock. Confirm the aircraft carries a current weight and balance report and equipment list. Few were fitted for IFR.

VARIANTS AND LIMITS

The PA-16 has 4 seats, a 1650 lb normal limit and a 1400 lb utility limit; the rear seat is not used in utility category. The PA-16S has 3 seats, a 1738 lb limit, normal category only, and 2600 rpm for all operations. Eligible serial numbers are 16-1 and up. Piper makes it for spare parts only.

HOW IT FLIES

It lifts off at about 50 mph, then climbs at about 75 mph. Target 75 mph on base and 65 to 70 on final; the manual calls for 65 mph and anything over 75 is too fast. Controls stay effective in crosswinds. Expect poor in-flight visibility, so work to look for traffic.

SPECIFICATIONS

Engine	Lycoming O-235-C1
Rated Power Hp	108
Takeoff Power Hp	115
Seats	4
Fuel Capacity Gal	30
Fuselage Tank Gal	12
Wing Tank Gal	18
Max Baggage Lbs	50

PERFORMANCE

Cruise Speed Kts	105
Fuel Burn Gph	6.2
Climb Rate Fpm	600

V-SPEEDS

Never Exceed Kts	122
Max Structural Cruising Kts	102
Maneuvering Normal Kts	91
Maneuvering Utility Kts	94

WEIGHT & BALANCE

Max Takeoff Weight Lbs	1650
Utility Category Max Weight Lbs	1400
Pa 16s Max Weight Lbs	1738
Useful Load Lbs	750
Fuel Weight Full Lbs	180
Payload With Full Fuel Lbs	570

SAFETY NOTES

- Placard by the fuel valve: the fuselage tank must be full until the wing tank is empty. Pilot literature is inconsistent on which tank to use first.
- The horizontal stabilizer has no camber. A stall with the ball off-center gives a vicious rolloff, which is most serious if entered low.
- Acrobatics, including spins, are prohibited in Normal Category. Baggage is limited to 50 lbs.