

Cessna 172 Skyhawk Model Guide

The Cessna 172 Skyhawk is a four-seat, single-engine piston airplane built since 1956 and still listed as in production. Engines and equipment vary a lot by year: the 1972 manual shows a 150 hp Lycoming, and the 1964 manual shows a 145 hp Continental. Check the exact year and engine of any airplane you consider.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Cessna 172 Skyhawk: 4 seats, piston engine, in production since 1956, with listed range of 640 nm.
- The 1972 manual lists a 2300 lbs gross weight and 120 lbs of baggage.
- The 1972 manual lists 42 gal standard fuel, with 52 gal long-range tanks optional.
- Engine and performance figures differ by year, so match the manual to the airplane.

PERFORMANCE (1972 MANUAL)

The 1972 owner's manual lists a 645 fpm sea-level climb rate, a 13,100 ft service ceiling and an 865 ft takeoff ground run. The library figure for takeoff distance is 1630 ft, while the manual gives 1525 ft over a 50-foot obstacle. Treat these as new-airplane figures, not what a worn example will do.

ENGINES ACROSS THE YEARS

The 1972 manual lists a Lycoming O-320-E2D with 150 rated HP at 2700 RPM. The 1964 manual lists a Continental O-300 with 145 HP. A float-equipped 1968 example in the training documents has a 180 HP Lycoming O-360. G1000 Nav III documents cover the 172R and 172S, so confirm which engine and avionics you are buying.

WHAT TO CHECK ON INSPECTION

The older manuals' walk-around says to check oil level and not to operate with less than six quarts. They also call for draining the fuel strainer, checking tires and the nose strut, and checking pitot, static and fuel vent openings for stoppage. The 172S checklist has a different oil minimum, so use the manual for your specific airplane.

SPECIFICATIONS

Seats	4
Range Nm	640
Fuel Capacity Gal	42
Baggage Capacity Lbs	120
Engine Power Hp	150

PERFORMANCE

Range Nm	640
Takeoff Distance Ft	1630
Takeoff Ground Run Ft	865
Rate Of Climb Fpm	645
Service Ceiling Ft	13100

WEIGHT & BALANCE

Gross Weight Lbs	2300
Baggage Capacity Lbs	120

SAFETY NOTES

- The AOPA Air Safety Foundation booklet says forty percent of serious Skyhawk accidents occur in the first 200 hours of pilot total time.
- The same booklet says night flying and marginal weather increase accident risk. Get a weather briefing and plan an alternate course of action.
- Oil minimums differ between manuals (six quarts in older manuals, over 4 qts in the 172S checklist). Follow the manual for the airplane in question.