



FLYBRIGHT
PILOT ACADEMY

PILOT CAREER GUIDE





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CAREER OPTIONS





AIRLINE PILOT

Job Description

Airline pilots are responsible for operating commercial aircraft that transport passengers on a large scale. This includes planning flights, navigating routes, monitoring systems, and ensuring passenger safety.

Hours of Experience

Airlines require 1,500 flight hours for ATP certification, though programs like military training or university partnerships can reduce this.

Work Environment

Schedule:

- Airline pilots often work variable hours, including nights, weekends, and holidays, depending on seniority.

Work Locations:

- Airline pilots typically fly out of a designated hub, however they can commute even from out-of-state.

Lifestyle:

- Days away from home are common, requiring overnight stays in different cities or countries.
- Seniority dictates schedules, destinations, and opportunities for more stable hours.

Potential Earnings

	First Officer	Captain (Narrow Body)₁	Capital (Wide Body)₂
Year 1	\$100,840	\$273,220	\$338,500
Year 6	\$187,540	\$283,420	\$351,760
Year 12	\$204,880	\$296,680	\$368,080

Estimates based on Delta Air Lines pilots flying a 7371, or an A3502 for 85 hours per month and an additional \$7,000 annual per diem. Note: these numbers are approximations and are not promises of future earnings. * Only the most senior pilots will hold this position. Senior Captains can make up to \$500,000 - \$800,000 a year.



CHARTER PILOT

Job Description

Charter pilots operate private aircraft for on-demand services. Unlike airline pilots, charter pilots often fly smaller planes to a wide range of destinations, including those not served by commercial airlines.

Hours of Experience

Most charter operators require at least 500–1,500 flight hours, depending on the aircraft and the company.

Work Environment

Schedule:

- Charter pilots work highly variable schedules, often flying on short notice. Flexibility is key, as clients dictate flight timing and destinations.

Interaction with Clients:

- Unlike airline pilots, charter pilots frequently interact with passengers, providing a personalized experience.

Lifestyle:

- A charter pilot's lifestyle is flexible and dynamic, with irregular schedules, unique destinations, and direct client interaction. It offers variety and adventure but requires adaptability to on-demand flights and balancing personal life.

Potential Earnings

Starting Salary:

- Entry-level charter pilots earn around \$50,000–\$120,000 per year, depending on the aircraft and employer.

Experienced Pilots:

- Captains on larger jets or with prestigious charter companies can earn \$150,000–\$350,000+ per year, especially if flying internationally.

Benefits:

- Flexible travel opportunities and exposure to unique destinations.
- Competitive health and retirement benefits (varies by employer).
- Some companies offer bonuses or profit-sharing incentives.

CARGO PILOT

Job Description

Cargo pilots operate aircraft that transport goods instead of passengers. These goods can range from everyday items like mail and packages to specialty cargo such as medical supplies, perishable goods, or heavy machinery. Cargo pilots are critical in ensuring global supply chains remain efficient.

Hours of Experience

- Entry-level positions may require 500–1,500 flight hours, depending on the employer.
- Larger carriers typically require 2,500–3,000+ hours of total flight time.

Work Environment

Schedule:

- Cargo pilots often fly at night due to airport and airspace availability.
- Irregular schedules, including long-haul flights and multi-day trips, are common.

Routes and Destinations:

- Domestic cargo pilots typically fly shorter routes within a country.
- International cargo pilots transport goods globally, requiring extended travel periods.

Unique Conditions:

- Cargo pilots may deal with unconventional cargo, requiring specialized handling (e.g., live animals, hazardous materials).

Potential Earnings

Starting Salary:

- Entry-level cargo pilots earn approximately \$50,000–\$150,000 per year, depending on the operator.

Experienced Pilots:

- Captains flying large jets with over 20 years experience can earn up to \$500,000–\$800,000 per year, with international routes often paying more.



CORPORATE PILOT

Job Description

Corporate pilots fly private jets or turboprops for businesses, sport teams, or high-net-worth individuals. They often provide a personalized, flexible service, operating on-demand flights to various destinations, including locations that may not be served by commercial airlines. These pilots frequently manage the aircraft and operations such as maintenance, hiring, and scheduling.

Hours of Experience

Many corporate pilot roles require 1,500–3,000 hours of flight time, though smaller operations may accept less for entry-level positions.

Work Environment

Schedule:

- Corporate pilots work highly variable schedules, often accommodating last-minute client requests.
- Trips can range from short domestic flights to multi-day international trips.

Routes and Destinations:

- Corporate pilots frequently fly to smaller airports, providing clients access to exclusive or remote locations.

Unique Conditions:

- Unlike airline pilots, corporate pilots often engage directly with passengers, requiring excellent customer service skills.

Potential Earnings

Starting Salary:

- Entry-level corporate pilots can earn \$50,000–\$120,000 per year, depending on the aircraft and employer.

Experienced Pilots:

- Captains flying midsize or large jets can earn \$150,000–\$300,000 per year, especially with international routes or high-profile clients.





FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR

Job Description

Flight instructors are professional pilots who teach aspiring aviators how to fly and prepare them for earning various pilot certifications. They play a key role in shaping safe, competent pilots and often use the role to gain flight hours and experience for further career advancement.

Hours of Experience

Pilots typically need 250+ hours of flight time to earn their commercial rating and start working as a CFI.

Work Environment

Schedule:

- Flight instructors work flexible schedules, often including weekends and unique hours.

Interactions with students:

- Instructors work closely with a wide range of students, from hobbyists to career individuals.
- Instructors are responsible for monitoring student morale and shaping curriculum to individual needs.

Locations:

- Flight instructors typically operate out of fixed-base operators (FBOs), flight schools, or collegiate aviation programs.

Potential Earnings

Starting Salary:

- Entry-level CFIs earn around \$30,000–\$50,000 per year, depending on the flight school and location.

Experienced Instructors:

- CFIs with additional ratings (e.g., CFII, MEI) or those working at high-volume schools can earn \$50,000–\$80,000 per year.
- Specialized career instructors can earn around \$150,000 per year.



Government Pilots Jobs

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Pilot

FAA pilots operate government-owned aircraft for various missions, including flight inspections, testing aviation technologies, and providing training. They may also be involved in investigating aviation accidents and ensuring compliance with federal regulations.

U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Pilot

USFS pilots fly aircraft to assist in firefighting efforts, conducting reconnaissance, transporting personnel, and delivering supplies. They also help with managing national forests and public lands by performing aerial surveys and monitoring wildlife.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Pilot

NOAA pilots fly aircraft to support environmental research, including monitoring weather patterns, tracking hurricanes, and conducting scientific surveys. They also perform aerial surveys of marine life and ecosystems.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Pilot

USDA pilots often operate aircraft for agricultural-related missions, such as crop dusting, pest control, and environmental monitoring. They may also be involved in wildlife conservation efforts.

There are many more government jobs like state police, FBI, CIA, as well as active and reserve military pilots.



Other Career Options

Aerial Survey Pilot

Aerial survey pilots fly aircraft equipped with specialized equipment to collect data for mapping, land surveys, and environmental studies. They may work for companies in industries such as construction, agriculture, and natural resources.

Air Ambulance Pilot

Air ambulance pilots operate helicopters or small planes to transport patients, medical staff, and equipment to and from hospitals. They often work in emergency medical services (EMS) and are crucial for providing rapid medical transport.

Flight Test Pilot

Flight test pilots work with aerospace manufacturers or government agencies to test the performance and safety of new aircraft. They perform test flights, assess handling characteristics, and help identify any design flaws.

Banner Tow Pilot

Banner tow pilots fly small aircraft that tow large advertising banners. These pilots typically work for marketing companies, especially during events or at beaches, sports games, and festivals.

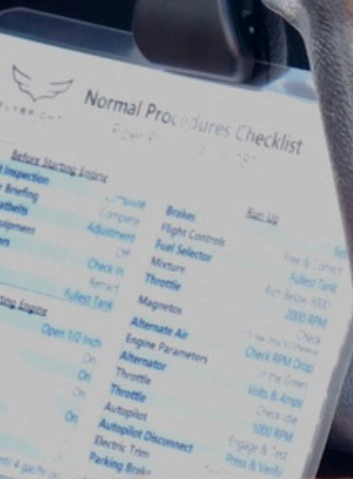
Wildlife Survey Pilot

Wildlife survey pilots fly aircraft to monitor and survey wildlife populations in remote areas. They may assist in tracking animal movements, conducting population counts, and gathering data for conservation efforts.

Film and TV Production Pilot

Film and TV production pilots are hired to fly helicopters or planes for aerial shots in movies, TV shows, or commercials. They work closely with directors to ensure the shots are safe and visually compelling.

STEPS TO BECOME A PILOT



Steps to become a pilot

1

Private Pilot Certificate

The journey to becoming a commercial pilot begins with earning a Private Pilot Certificate. Training in a single-engine airplane, this foundational stage focuses on mastering essential skills and building the groundwork for advanced certifications and ratings.

2

Instrument Rating

After earning a Private Pilot Certificate, the next step is obtaining an Instrument Rating. This rating enables pilots to fly under Instrument Flight Rules (IFR), allowing them to navigate safely in various weather conditions.

3

Commercial Pilot Certificate

The next step is obtaining a Commercial Pilot Certificate. This requires meeting specific experience requirements and demonstrating a higher level of proficiency, enabling pilots to legally earn compensation for their flying services.

4

Flight Instructor Certificate

After fulfilling the commercial pilot requirements, the next step is to obtain a Flight Instructor Certificate. As a Certified Flight Instructor (CFI), pilots can build the flight hours needed for career eligibility while earning an income through instructing.

5

Add Multi-Engine Rating

To operate large passenger airliners, pilots must obtain multi-engine privileges. Adding a Multi-Engine Rating to a Commercial Pilot Certificate is the final step before gaining the experience needed to meet airline hiring requirements.

6

Gain Experience

Flight instructing allows pilots to gain the necessary quality and relevant experience to meet the requirements for obtaining an Airline Transport Pilot (ATP) Certificate, while also refining their skills and building valuable hours in a professional aviation environment.

7

Pilot Job of Choice

Once you meet the requirements for the ATP certificate, you will fulfill the hiring minimums for most regional airline pilot positions.



Next Steps

Let your career take off today!

Begin planning your pilot career by exploring the financing options available for flight training. Applying for financing is quick and easy, and there is no obligation to accept a loan or start training if you're approved. Find out what options are available to you today!

Apply today at iflybright.com/financing

This packet is for informational purposes and is not a guarantee to career opportunities and income.





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