

Flight School 101 - What is ALPA

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The Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) is the largest airline pilot union in the world and represents over 66,000 pilots at 42 U.S. and Canadian airlines. ALPA was founded in 1931 and they are committed to advancing the piloting profession and ensuring that airline travel keeps growing safer. For 80 years, ALPA has contributed to some notable achievements in aviation safety. As a [flight school student](#) who will soon be a commercial pilot, you will have the chance to become a member of this union. Here is a brief summary of what ALPA will do for you.

The mission of the Air Line Pilots Association is to promote all aspects of aviation safety in all segments of the aviation community; to represent the collective interests of all pilots in commercial aviation; to assist in collective bargaining activities on behalf of pilots; to promote the health and welfare of the members of the Association before governmental agencies; to be a strong advocate of the airline piloting profession and to be a defender of the rights and privileges of the professional pilots who are members of the Association.

ALPA's founders chose "Schedule with Safety" as their motto, and that theme remains central to the union today. ALPA has been a part of nearly every significant safety improvement in the airline industry. The Association has helped make airline travel the safest mode of transportation in history. More than 600 working airline pilots volunteer to serve on ALPA committees. The union's engineers and safety and security experts provide independent analysis on emerging airline safety and security issues. ALPA is routinely granted "interested party" status in most major airline accidents, which means that ALPA accident investigators assist the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and the Transportation Safety Board of Canada during investigations and participate in public hearings. The union's commitment to unbiased, fact-based evaluation of airline safety and security issues has earned them a very good reputation.

Pilots make decisions through the democratic process at all levels of ALPA. Decisions start with pilot groups. Each pilot group consists of all the pilots at a given airline. Pilot groups exercise considerable autonomy in governing their own internal affairs, such as negotiating contracts, enforcing those contracts, and discussing issues of concern with their companies.

In summary, here are the three basic things ALPA provides for its members: Airline Safety and Security, Representation, and Advocacy. We hope this article gives flight school students more information about the benefits you get when you become a [commercial pilot](#).

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