

Becoming an Airline Pilot & Pilot's Life

Date: March 1, 2010 11:31 AM

Author: [Dan Chambers](#)

Source: [ALPA](#)

Tags: [aviation career](#), [aviator college](#), [Aviator School](#), [best flight school](#), [flight training](#), [pilot](#)

Permalink: <http://bit.ly/bzJGWL>

Here is important information to help you decide if you want to become an airline pilot. This is good reading for the prospective flight training student and for the student who is already in flight school. This information was provided by The Airline Pilots Association (ALPA) the largest and oldest pilot union in the world.

The Piloting Profession

The three positions in the airline piloting profession are captain, first officer (co-pilot), and second officer (flight engineer). In Canada, the second officer and flight engineer are separate certificates; the second officer may hold a flight engineer rating, but a flight engineer is not necessarily a pilot. Not all aircraft operated by the airlines require a second officer; in fact, all new aircraft now are designed to be flown with a captain and first officer sharing all the duties.

On most airlines, a [pilot](#) progresses into the captain's position of ultimate authority and responsibility through experience. Experience is vital because no two flights are alike, and the manner in which a particular flight is conducted will depend on many factors. These may include: weather on departure, en route, and at the destination; available navigation aids and air traffic control; aircraft loading; airline and regulatory requirements; and, of course, passenger comfort. To meet all of these changing and sometimes conflicting considerations safely and effectively requires knowledge and skill that can be gained only with experience. And only experience prepares a crew for those rare occasions when they are confronted with an emergency that, if not dealt with promptly and precisely, could become a tragedy.

Each pilot position requires a pilot certificate and a currently valid medical certificate issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in the United States, or by the Department of Transport (Transport Canada) in Canada.

A Pilot's Life

Airline pilots, because of FAA regulations, cannot fly more than 100 hours a month or more than a total of 1000 hours per year. Most airline pilots average around 75 hours of [flying](#) a month. Pilots spend several hours each day between flights waiting for their aircraft or waiting for flight delays to clear. These duty hours are not paid. A 75-hour flight month may also have about 140 duty hours and approximately 360 hours away from base.

Airline pilots work together as a crew. Most commonly, two pilots can be found on the flight deck during flight; however, on some larger aircraft there may also be a third required crew member known as the Flight Engineer who assists in monitoring and operating several of the systems of the aircraft. There are also Flight Attendants that provide passengers with

evacuation instructions in the event of an emergency, as well as customer service during the flight to make the flying experience more pleasant. An Airline Pilot must work well with their crew and manage these resources in the event of an abnormality.

Pilots generally receive free flight benefits from their employer and most use this ability to travel to and from work if they choose to commute from a city outside of their hub. Pilots on reserve generally must be able to report for duty within 2 hours of notice. This usually results in the pilot living at his or her hub city. Most airlines have reciprocal jump seat agreements that allow airline pilots of different carriers to share their available jump seat with each other.

The jump seat is physically an auxiliary seat located in the cockpit of most airline aircraft, on some larger aircraft there may be multiple jump seats located in the cockpit. Jump seating is a long standing tradition negotiated by union pilots since airline service began.

The most obvious benefit of an aviation career and serving as an airline pilot is the flying. Any pilot can attest to the joy of commanding an aircraft and assuming the responsibility for, and the challenge of, operating a multi-million dollar aircraft with the trust of its passengers. The love of flying keeps the weathered days sunny. If this seems like a match for your career goals, your aspirations, and your sense of adventure, then begin your journey and start your [flight training](#).

[Distributed by IntelBuilder Social Media Platform](#)