



## Attaining a Commercial Pilot License

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is in charge of administering examinations and certifying pilots in the United States. There are different types of pilot certifications that are awarded in the US. Some of the privilege levels that one may be certified in include student pilot, sport pilot, recreation pilot, private pilot, commercial pilot, and airline transport pilot. A commercial pilot is one who can fly for compensations although he has some restrictions on aircrafts with sophisticated instruments. Read on to find out more about how to attain a commercial pilot's license.



### Commercial Pilot License

For persons who are considering to attain a commercial pilot license, it is advisable to first find an FAA accredited flight school with good instructors and work to attain their private pilot certificates.

The FAA's minimum flight hours for this license are 40 hours but the average time is approximately 55 hours. One should also get a first class certified medical certificate from the FAA medical examiner. When applying for a medical certificate, it is advisable to apply for the first class medical certificate. With the first class medical certificate you can be sure that you are qualified for piloting; and so you save on time that might be wasted in pursuing flight lessons while not medically qualified.

After getting the private pilot license, one should start working on his/her commercial certificate and instrument rating. Commercial certificate requires a total of 250 flying hours and 10 hours of education in a complex airplane. To be certified in instrument rating, one must have a total of 50 hours in cross-country flying as the pilot-in-command with an additional 40 hours of simulated or actual instrument conditions.

It is good to complete the certified flight instructor (CFI) accreditation and begin to work in your flight school. In exchange for working as flight instructors for them, some flight schools usually offer flight hours to the students. This may be advantageous when you are advancing to multi-engine rating.

If you have not completed college, it is advisable to get your degree first. Most pilots require a bachelor's degree in order to be eligible for piloting. The degree is not required to be aviation related. It is only a demonstration that one is able to handle the piloting educational programs offered at the flight school.

### Obtaining a Commercial Pilot License

One can obtain a **commercial pilot license** either through a certified flight school or through a certified instructor. If you prefer a freelance instructor, you will need to clock 250 hours of flight. These hours are not continuous; they are divided into pilot-in-command time, cross-country hours, etc. Those who prefer flight schools need fewer hours than those flying with freelance instructors. The only downside of choosing flight schools is that you will be required to begin the training from the private pilot license stage in a part 141 program. In this way, you can get your commercial pilot license with minimum hours of 190. In order to advance to an airline pilot, you are required to have completed instrument rating (IR) or be currently undertaking an instrument rating course.



Before obtaining a commercial pilot license, it is a must to obtain the private pilot license, whether you want to fly for recreation or seek to pursue further advanced aircraft training. This license grants a pilot permission to fly light single-engine aircrafts. You

may carry passengers although there is no compensation for private pilot license holders. After being awarded the private license, you may seek the commercial pilot license. The training for a commercial pilot license covers a deeper understanding of systems of the aircraft and increased standards of airmanship. The commercial pilot certificate restricts flying in conditions, which require the pilots to rely solely on their weather navigation instruments. Commercial pilots are expected to be knowledgeable in operating airplanes with adjustable flaps, controllable pitch propellers, and retractable landing gears.

To be eligible for a commercial pilot license, one is required to meet some stringent requirements. You must be at least 18 years old and must be a holder of a private pilot license; you



## Aviation Career Feature

should be able to speak, read, write, and understand English; you must pass an aeronautical test consisting of 100 questions and an oral exam given by the FAA-designated examiner, and an FAA inspector. In addition, the commercial pilot license seeker should have accumulated and logged the stipulated amount of experience and training.

### Education and Training

Some airlines may hire high school graduates but most employers prefer college graduates with a minimum of 2 years in college. No additional training is required although geography skills like map reading, reading weather instruments, reading the compass, etc may be helpful. The minimum age for joining commercial license programs is 18 years. Other lower level certifications like the student pilot license require persons to be at least 16 years of age.

### Job Outlook and Prospects

Commercial pilots can find good opportunities in low-cost carriers and regional airlines. Commercial pilots attempting to enter major airlines usually face stiff competition, because

pilots applying for such jobs are usually more than the available vacancies. Moreover, major airlines usually prefer to hire full airline pilots as opposed to commercial pilots, because airline pilots have superior training in instrument ratings and higher flight hours than commercial pilots. There will be a rise in demand for **commercial pilots** as low-cost carriers and regional airlines grow and expand their air routes. There are also opportunities for commercial pilots in air cargo transport, as many individuals and firms are engaged in e-commerce, and there is an increasing demand for secure shipping freight. Pilots who have logged most hours and have the knowledge of using sophisticated instruments will have better chances of employment.

The airline industry is expected to grow in the long run due to increased population and the stabilization of low-cost carriers in the market. However, the industry will decline in the short run due to fluctuations in the global oil prices, and some airlines may need to force some pilots into retirement. Increase in the international price of fuel is also expected to stifle entrepreneurs from entering the airline industry in the short run.

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