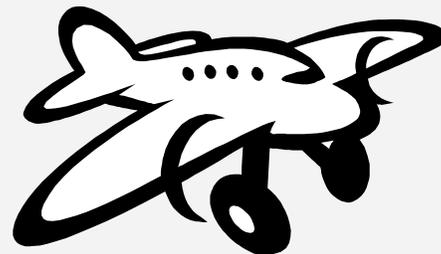


# Florida Institute of Technology– Career Management Services

## Career Profile: Aviation-Pilot

Pilots are highly trained professionals who fly airplanes or helicopters to carry out a wide variety of tasks. Most are airline pilots, copilots, and flight engineers who transport passengers and cargo. However, 34 percent are commercial pilots involved in dusting crops, spreading seed for reforestation, testing aircraft, flying passengers and cargo to areas not served by regular airlines, directing firefighting efforts, tracking criminals, monitoring traffic, and rescuing and evacuating injured persons.



Most pilots spend a considerable amount of time away from home because the majority of flights involve overnight layovers. According to the Airline Pilot's Association, pilots spend approximately 360 hours a month away from their home base. When pilots are away from home, the airlines provide hotel accommodations, transportation between the hotel and airport, and an allowance for meals and other expenses.

**Airline pilots**, especially those on international routes, often experience jet lag—fatigue caused by many hours of flying through different time zones. To guard against pilot fatigue, which could result in unsafe flying conditions, the FAA requires airlines to allow pilots at least 8 hours of uninterrupted rest in the 24 hours before finishing their flight duty.

**Commercial pilots** also may have irregular schedules, flying 30 hours one month and 90 hours the next. Because these pilots frequently have many nonflying responsibilities, they have much less free time than do airline pilots. Except for corporate flight department pilots, most commercial pilots do not remain away from home overnight, although they may work odd hours. However, if the company owns a fleet of planes, pilots may fly a regular schedule. **Flight instructors** may have irregular and seasonal work schedules, depending on their students' available time and the weather. Instructors frequently work in the evening or on weekends.

Many pilots have learned to fly in the military, but growing numbers have college degrees with flight training from civilian flying schools that are certified by the FAA. All pilots who are paid to transport passengers or cargo must have a commercial pilot's license.

To qualify for FAA licensure, applicants must be at least 18 years old and have at least 250 hours of flight experience. Applicants also must pass a strict physical examination to make sure that they are in good health and have 20/20 vision with or without corrective lenses, good hearing, and no physical handicaps that could impair their performance. They must pass a written test that includes questions on the principles of safe flight, navigation techniques, and FAA regulations, and must demonstrate their flying ability to FAA or designated examiners.

The median annual wage of airline pilots, copilots, and flight engineers was \$103,210 in May 2010. The median wage is the wage at which half the workers in an occupation earned more than that amount and half earned less. Among airline pilots, the lowest 10 percent earned less than \$54,980 and the top 10 percent earned more than \$166,400.

The median annual wage of commercial pilots was \$67,500 in May 2010. Among commercial pilots, the lowest 10 percent earned less than \$34,860 and the top 10 percent earned more than \$119,650.

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**For more information on a career as a pilot contact the Career Management Services Office or your academic advisor.**

**Source:** Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2012-13 Edition



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