

# Maintaining Safety and Pilot Supply

## 1. Preserve current safety regulations.

Public Law 111-216 and the FAA rule changes to first officer minimum qualifications that took effect in 2010 and 2013, respectively, have improved the overall safety of our airspace system.

Prior to 9/11, many airlines maintained minimum hiring requirements that were much greater than the current 1,500 hours required for an air transport pilot (ATP) certificate, and far higher than the requirements that exist for the restricted ATP (R-ATP).

The R-ATP certificate qualifies pilots for first officer airline pilot employment at reduced levels of flight-hour experience because of military or accredited university training.

- ▶▶ 750 hours, if qualified as a military aviator
- ▶▶ 1,000 hours, with a four-year aviation degree
- ▶▶ 1,250 hours, with a two-year aviation degree

This credit is due to a combination of varying types of aeronautical experience, written and practical exams, formal academic instruction, and other competitive factors needed to gain employment as a Part 121 airline pilot.

After 9/11, airlines began to lower their standards in order to attract more pilots, which led to an increase in accidents and a reduction in overall safety.

While some may point to a single accident in 2009 that led to a change in first officer qualifications, the FAA has identified 31 accidents over a 10-year period that were addressed

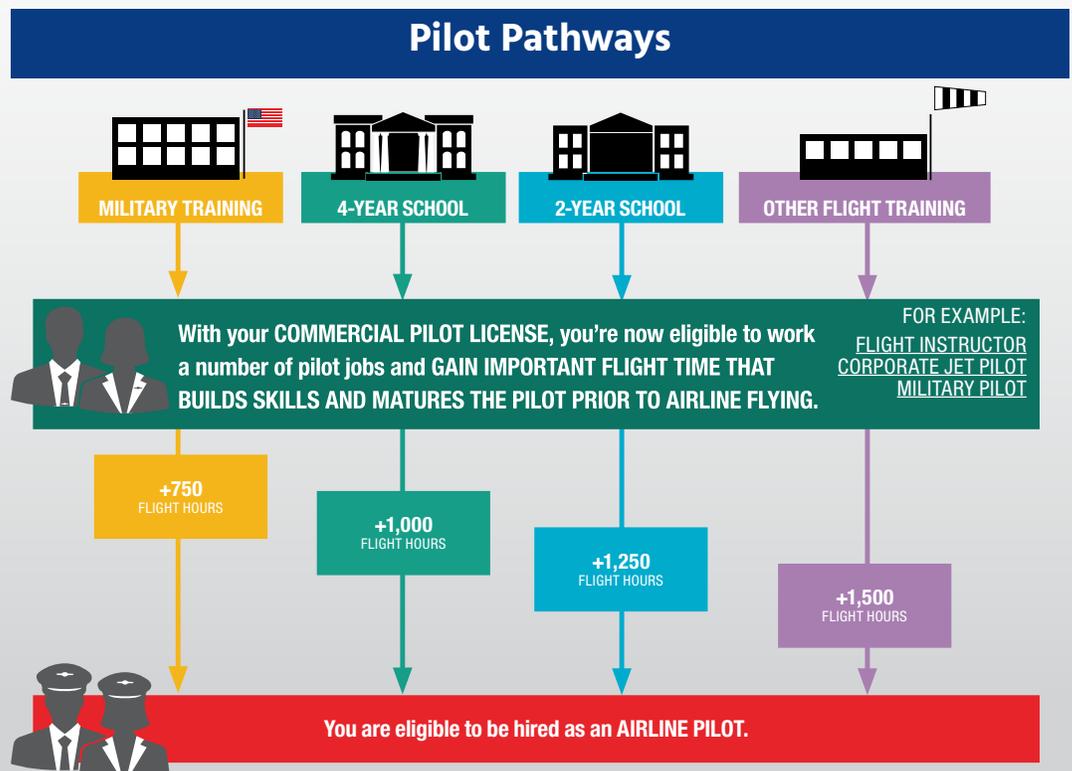
by the rules published in 2013. Four notable accidents include:

1. Pinnacle (Northwest AirlinK) Flight 3701, Oct. 14, 2004, Jefferson City, Mo.
2. Corporate Airlines (dba American Connection) Flight 5966, Oct. 19, 2004, Kirksville, Mo.
3. Comair (Delta Connection) Flight 5191, Aug. 27, 2006, Lexington, Ky.
4. Colgan Air (Continental Connection) Flight 3407, Feb. 12, 2009, Buffalo, N.Y.

Since passage of the Airline Safety and FAA Extension Act of 2010, there have been no fatalities due to an accident of a U.S. Part 121 passenger airline. In fact, in the two decades prior to enactment of this aviation safety measure, there were more than 1,100 airline passenger fatalities (Part 121), according to the National Transportation Safety Board.

## 2. Pilot supply remains strong in the United States.

The current number of ATP/R-ATP issuances remains strong. More than 26,000 have been issued since July



2013 (see graphic at right), including more than 4,000 R-ATP certificates.

This is an average of more than 7,400 ATP/R-ATP certificates issued per year. It exceeds the most optimistic pilot needs forecast (see graphic below). For comparison, the 20-year average number of ATP certificates exceeds 6,000 per year.

**3. Air service to small communities is impacted by economics, not by pilot supply.**

Access to and from many small communities has increased since 2012. Newer, larger aircraft have also increased the number of seats available even though, in some cases, the number of departures has decreased.

Passenger demand—not availability of pilots—is what drives an airline’s decisions on which markets to serve. Airlines will go where they can make money, and leave markets where they are losing money.

**4. Airlines that have increased pay, benefits, quality of life, and flow-through programs have had no problem hiring pilots.**

However, many regional airlines still offer first-year salaries below \$30,000 or temporary bonuses that may not be there by the time a student completes their education and flight training. Basic economics should drive up salaries if these airlines want to remain competitive in the U.S. market. Rolling back the qualification requirements for first officers will not improve the hiring numbers at these airlines—pilots will go to the airlines that offer the best career progression and quality of life.

**Conclusion: The FOQ rules must remain in place to maintain current levels of safety. Data shows that there is no current pilot shortage.**

