



**Air Line Pilots Association, International**  
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## **Alaska Pilot Negotiations Facts**

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### **Q: What Are the Alaska Pilots Asking for?**

A: Alaska's pilots are seeking an increase in pay while looking to maintain the quality of life afforded by the other provisions of their contract. What Alaska's pilots are seeking can be categorized in four areas: work rules (including compensation), retirement security, job security and health benefits.

Alaska's pilots are not willing to sacrifice anything more than they already have given to a profitable employer.

### **Q: How Much Are Alaska Pilots Paid?**

A: Alaska's pilots pay ranges from about \$31,600 per year to about \$156,800. Prior to the arbitrated pay cuts on May 1, 2005, pilots made between \$46,800 and \$200,000.

### **Q: How Many Hours Does the Average Pilot Work Each Week?**

A: This question is difficult to answer, as there is no "typical" work day or week for a pilot. Pilots often work weekends and holidays and can be away from their families several days at a time. Pilots' schedules and work hours are calculated much differently from traditional 9 to 5 jobs. They are paid hourly, from the time the aircraft leaves the gate until it returns to the gate at its destination — as a result, the hours a pilot is paid to work and the actual time spent on duty and away from base vary greatly. There are three significant measures of a pilot's time spent at work: hours flown (the hours the plane is actually in the air), hours on duty (start to finish of a work day), and time away from base (from the start of an assignment until it ends, which normally is three or four days, but could be as long as six days at one stretch). Alaska Airlines pilots typically *fly* five to seven hours a day, which means that they are on *duty* for about nine to 12 hours of that day. Pilots typically are away from base, and from their families, about 240 to 300 hours per month (or about 60 to 75 hours a week).

### **Q: How Much Experience Do Alaska Pilot Have Prior to Coming to Work for Alaska Airlines?**

A: Alaska pilots must meet certain minimum levels of education and flight experience before being considered for employment at Alaska Airlines. Most often, the experience pilots accrue prior to coming to work at Alaska far exceeds those minimums. All Alaska pilots must possess a four-year degree, and about 10% have earned advanced degrees. The average, newly hired pilot has about 5,500 flight hours before coming to Alaska Airlines, which means that a pilot typically has been flying seven to 10 years of experience before being hired at Alaska. This experience is gained largely by flying for smaller carriers or in the military.

### **Q: How Much of a Payout Did Alaska Pilots Take Two Years Ago?**

A: Payouts ranged from 21.9% to 34.3%. The least senior, lowest paid pilots received the greatest percentage payouts.

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**Q: If Alaska's Pilots Don't Like What They're Being Offered, Why Don't They Go Work Somewhere Else?**

A: Airline pilots across the industry work and are paid based on a seniority system. If a pilot were to leave his or her current company to go work for a different airline, that pilot would start at the bottom of the seniority list his or her new employer. This means that the salary for that pilot would drop to the bottom tier of his or her new company and he or she would, in essence, have to start over.

Part of starting over means having to work as an on-call pilot with almost no control over your schedule; a newly hired pilot may be on call for years before he or she gains enough seniority to have a regular schedule (known in pilot lingo as "holding a line").

Finally, a large number of Alaska Airlines' pilots have strong ties to the Pacific Northwest and to the state of Alaska; many grew up in these areas and work for Alaska Airlines because this is the area in which they want to live. Working for another airline would almost certainly mean uprooting families and moving to a different part of the country.

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*Founded in 1931, the Air Line Pilots Association represents more than 60,000 pilots at 41 airlines in the United States and Canada, including the approximately 1,500 pilots at Alaska Airlines.*