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| Aircraft | Airports | Air Traffic | Data & Research | Licenses & Certificates | Regulations & Policies | Training & Testing |

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Press Release – FAA Boosts Aviation Safety with New Pilot Qualification Standards

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For Immediate Release

July 10, 2013
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WASHINGTON – In a final rule to be published soon, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced today that it is increasing the qualification requirements for first officers who fly for U.S. passenger and cargo airlines.

The rule requires first officers – also known as co-pilots – to hold an Airline Transport Pilot (ATP) certificate, requiring 1,500 hours total time as a pilot. Previously, first officers were required to have only a commercial pilot certificate, which requires 250 hours of flight time.

The rule also requires first officers to have an aircraft type rating, which involves additional training and testing specific to the airplanes they fly.

"Safety will be my overriding priority as Secretary, so I am especially pleased to mark my first week by announcing a rule that will help us maintain our unparalleled safety record," said Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. "We owe it to the traveling public to have only the most qualified and best trained pilots."

The new regulations stem in part from the tragic crash of Colgan Air 3407 in February 2009, and address a Congressional mandate in the Airline Safety and Federal Aviation Administration Extension Act of 2010 to ensure that both pilots and co-pilots receive the ATP certification. Today's rule is one of several rulemakings required by the Act, including the new flight duty and rest requirements for pilots that were finalized in December 2011, and new training requirements expected this fall for air carrier training programs to ensure pilots know how to react properly in difficult operating environments.

"The rule gives first officers a stronger foundation of aeronautical knowledge and experience before they fly for an air carrier," said FAA Administrator Michael Huerta. "With this rule and our efforts to address pilot fatigue – both initiatives championed by the families of Colgan flight 3407 – we're making a safe system even safer."

Other highlights of the rule include:

- A requirement for a pilot to have a minimum of 1,000 flight hours as a co-pilot in air carrier operations prior to serving as a captain for a U.S. airline.

- Enhanced training requirements for an ATP certificate, including 50 hours of multi-engine flight experience and completion of a new FAA-approved training program.

- An allowance for pilots with fewer than 1,500 hours of flight time or who have not reached the minimum age of 23 to obtain a "restricted privileges" ATP certificate. A restricted privileges ATP certificate allows a pilot to serve as a co-pilot until he or she obtains the necessary 1,500 hours. The options are:

  —Military pilots with 750 hours total time as a pilot;
  —Graduates holding a Bachelor's degree with an aviation major with 1,000 hours total time as a pilot;
  —Graduates holding an Associate's degree with an aviation major with 1,250 hours;

—Pilots who are at least 21 years old with 1,500 flight hours.

The rule is consistent with the Airline Safety and Federal Aviation Administration Extension Act of 2010. The rule addresses recommendations from an Aviation Rulemaking Committee, the National Transportation Safety Board, and the FAA's Call to Action to improve airline safety.

>**View Final Rule**

Pilot Qualifications Rule:

Qualifications	Prior Rules	New Rules
Airline Transport Pilot (ATP) certificate Multi-engine airplane	▪ At least 23 years old; ▪ Hold commercial pilot certificate with instrument rating; ▪ Pass ATP knowledge and practical tests; and ▪ 1,500 hours total time as pilot.	▪ Meet all requiremen ▪ Have at least 50 ho airplane; and ▪ Successfully compl Training Program p knowledge test (aft
Airline Transport Pilot certificate with restricted privileges (multiengine airplane rating only)	None	▪ At least 21 years ol ▪ Hold commercial pi rating; ▪ Successfully compl Training Program p knowledge test (aft ▪ Pass ATP knowledg ▪ At least 750 hours or ▪ At least 1,000 hour Bachelor's degree ▪ At least 1,250 hour Associate's degree ▪ 1,500 total time as
Serve as First Officer (Co-pilot) in Part 121 air carrier operations	▪ Hold commercial pilot certificate with instrument rating; and at least a second class medical certificate.	▪ ATP certificate with OR ▪ ATP certificate with type rating for aircr ▪ At least a second c
Serve as Captain (pilot in command) in Part 121 air carrier operations	▪ ATP certificate with type rating for aircraft flown; ▪ At least 1,500 hours total time as pilot; and ▪ First class medical certificate.	▪ Meet all requiremen ▪ At least 1,000 flight operations (as co-p Captain in fractiona Captain in Part 135 more passenger se combination thereo

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