

Become a Career Pilot at Aspen Flying Club

A professional pilot career begins the same way for every pilot. Obtaining a Private Pilot certificate is the foundation on which additional ratings are added. Most pilots pursue an Instrument rating next. The instrument rating teaches a pilot precision flying skills. It also allows a commercially rated pilot to fly for hire, at night. Because the instrument rating requires 50 hours of pilot in command cross-country time you will probably have logged about 150 hours of total flight time by the completion of your instrument rating. Your professional pilot career is really taking *wing* now! The next rating is a commercial pilot certificate. This rating allows you to fly for hire (getting paid to fly – this is what it's all about!). FAA Part 61 rules require a pilot to have 250 hours of total time as one of the requirements for this rating. Of that time, at least 10 hours will be in aircraft considered “complex”, having retractable landing gear and a constant speed propeller.

Just having a commercial rating doesn't make a pilot marketable. Pilot jobs will have hiring minimums of about 1,000 hours, specifically in certain type aircraft. For financial reasons, many professional pilot candidates elect to become a Certified Flight Instructor (CFI). At Aspen, we typically offer our CFI graduates a position. *Some of the greatest skills are learned by teaching.* This also creates an avenue to receive income from flying. Typically the amount is \$30 per hour of instruction given. You are also logging time in an airplane for which you are not paying.

For most career pilots, this is a path made necessary by economics. The reason is that the next major benchmark occurs with 1,000 hours of total time of which 100 hours are in multi-engine aircraft. If you do this on your own without the benefit of flight instruction revenue, it will cost approximately \$70,000. As a flight instructor, you will save that amount, because the student is paying for the plane. In addition, you will have been paid about \$20,000 for your instruction given. That makes the difference between the two options a total of \$90,000, and for most career pilots, that is money they would have difficulty coming up with on their own.

So what happens at 1,000/100 hours? At this point, you will be able to apply with regional carriers and charter operators, such as International Jet. Or you can continue your training at a school with advanced jet simulators and computerized ground instruction, such as Atlas Airline Academy with as few as 500 hours. Atlas charges \$5,500 for training to fly a regional jet. They will also assist you in getting an interview with one of the carriers, such as American Eagle.

At Aspen Flying Club, we have the unique aircraft and programs to prepare you for your career as a commercial pilot. Our initial training aircraft include a Cessna 172 and Cirrus SR20, both with a “glass cockpit”. These “technically advanced aircraft” do not have traditional round dials in the instrument panel. Instead there are two large computer displays with all your aircraft and flight information presented on an LCD flat display. These are the types of displays in all newer airliners and commercial jets. All of your training will be in similar glass environments. That gives you a definite advantage in moving to the next step in your aviation career.

You can complete all your training through Private and Instrument, and you can also accumulate the bulk of the time required for your commercial certificate in these advanced aircraft. By the end of summer, 2006, we will also have the Diamond DA-42 TwinStar. It has twin diesel engines, a glass cockpit and retractable gear. This aircraft will give you the capability of accumulating the hours you need in multi, high performance, constant speed propeller and retractable gear aircraft.

Begin your flying career today. Give us a call, and we will assign an instructor to help you achieve your goals.