

FIJI AERONAUTICAL INFORMATION CIRCULAR



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CHIEF PILOT REQUIREMENTS FOR SMALL OPERATORS

1. Objective

- 1.1 The objective of this AIC is to detail the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji's (the Authority) policy and requirements for the conduct and minimum qualifications for a Chief Pilot for small operators.

2. Legal Considerations

- 2.1 An operator whose air operator's certificate authorises aerial work or charter operations or regular public transport operations (in accordance with ANR 34 must have an approved chief pilot. Without an approved chief pilot, an organisation cannot exercise the privileges of an AOC.
- 2.2 The Authority will approve the chief pilot for an organisation when it is satisfied that that the incumbent is competent to hold the position. Chief pilots are responsible for the professional standards of the pilots and personnel under their authority. They are also responsible for ensuring that all aircraft are dispatched with the safety of passengers and flight crew as their top priority.
- 2.3 The role of chief pilot requires a focus on regulatory compliance and is a critical link between the AOC holder and CAAF. To be effective in the role, chief pilots must have the knowledge, experience and strength of character to balance the sometimes conflicting demands of safety and commercial considerations. Management skills are not specified as a requirement for a chief pilot, but to be fully effective, a chief pilot will need those skills as soon as they commence their role. If formal training is not available, it is possible to learn management skills during a period as an understudy to an approved chief pilot in an Acting role capacity. Chief pilots also need operational expertise, technical skills, leadership ability and sound business sense. It is important to remember that chief pilots should be selected for their ability to perform the task. The duties of the chief pilot are not optional and cannot vary according to their particular personal interests. From safety point of view, decisions made without very urgent deadlines are likely to have better long-term outcomes than those made under pressure. Skills in planning and scheduling will help avoid 'crisis management' or what are known as un-programmed decisions. Exposure to the risk of an incident or accident is elevated when snap decisions are made

3. Policy

3.1 The Authority processes Chief Pilot nominations from operators. The following are then considered to be acceptable depending on the complexity and size of the operation as minimum experiences to act and hold the position of Chief Pilot.

Fleet type	Experience in commercial operations (Minimum)	Minimum Hours (Total Aeronautical Experience)		Remarks
Single Engine	6 months	500 hours (50 hours on type) *300 hours if only 1 aircraft (at the discretion of the Authority)		Must be employed full time.
Multi-engine (Single Pilot)	6 months	VFR 1000 hrs (200 hours on type)	IFR 1500 hrs (300 hours on type)	Must be employed full time.
Multi-engine (Multi-crew)	12 months	1500 hours, including 400 hours pilot in command of multi-engined aircraft.	2000 hours. Including 400 hours pilot in command of multi-engined aircraft.	The chief pilot must be employed full-time by the operator and cannot be chief pilot with another Operator. The 400 hours in command of multi-engine aircraft with 2 or more flight crew requirement may be waived by CAAF in the case of existing chief pilots of Operators obtaining such aircraft for the first time.

4. Definitions

For the purpose of this AIC:

“Approved” means approved in writing by the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji

“Authority” means the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji established under the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji Act Cap. 174A

“Authorized Person” means any suitably qualified person authorized in writing by the Authority to exercise any of the functions of an authorized person under the Act and its regulations;

“IFR” flight means a flight conducted in accordance with the Instrument Flight Rules.

“Operator” means a person who exercises operational control over an aircraft.

“Pilot in Command” means the pilot designated by the operator or owner, as being in command and charged with the safe conduct of a flight.

“VFR” flight means a flight conducted in accordance with the Visual Flight Rules

5. Chief Pilot Roles

5.1 The Chief Pilot of a general aviation business needs to formally meet with his or her pilots and with the Safety Manager every month. Use this monthly meeting to:

- Review and discuss past, current and future operations, including roster stability;
- Present any information that must be passed on from the Company's management;
- Present updates on any maintenance done on your aircraft, and discuss recurring aircraft defects;
- Highlight any changes relating to your operation in the SOPs, Planning Manuals and other AIP documents;
- Discuss incidents, accidents and other occurrences; explain your investigations into these and the results of your findings;
- Discuss observations of company pilots' flying over the past month;
- Reinforce company operating procedures; and
- Encourage a reporting culture where all hazards are identified and defects are reported, rectified and monitored.

5.2 Each month, review all pilot logbooks and training files for:

- Correctness of flight hours against aircraft flight records. Check pilots' flight and duty times for adherence to flight & duty scheme.
- Ensure each pilot is current. Consider whether they are due for any ANR 45 required checks, instrument rating or CRM renewals.

6. Applications

- 6.1 Applications for a Chief Pilot are made to CAAF as a nomination for a post-holder position. This is normally sent by the Accountable Manager. The respective CAAF Inspectorate staff for the operator will carry out the assessment based on experience, local knowledge, company knowledge and legislation knowledge.
- 6.2 A flight check of a prospective chief pilot is at the discretion of CAAF. The current recommendation is that a check is obligatory unless the applicant's in-flight performance has been observed by an FOI within the last 12 months, and can be assessed as satisfactory within the context of the proposed appointment. If a flight check is required an FOI must set out in writing and forward to the applicant the particulars of the required flight and identify the testing officer. Evaluation of the chief pilot's application may be suspended until the applicant satisfactorily completes a flight check.

7. What happens when the Chief Pilot goes on Leave?

- 7.1 It is a condition of the AOC that there must be a chief pilot of the operation. Without an approved chief pilot, an organisation cannot exercise the privileges of an AOC. Chief pilots must have procedures in place to deal with situations that may occur while they are on leave. The key is that the chief pilot, even though on leave, is still responsible for the safety of the operation authorised by the AOC. If they are in a position to continue to assume this responsibility while on leave, there is no requirement to have someone act in the position. However, the chief pilot should nominate a point of contact for CAAF with their company while they are away. An alternative arrangement could be to nominate an acting chief pilot while the chief pilot is on leave. This person would also need to go through the approval process.
- 7.2 CAAF may grant approval for a temporary chief pilot in the case of:
- unexpected illness of the current chief pilot;
 - a change to the operator's authorisations that requires qualifications not held by the current chief pilot;
 - annual leave or absences on duty away from home base for a short time. In this situation the current chief pilot's approval would not be revoked and the deputy chief pilot would be issued a temporary chief pilot approval for the period of absence;
 - reinstatement of a previously appointed chief pilot; and
 - loss of chief pilot's qualifications.
- 7.3 CAAF may assess and approve a person as an alternate chief pilot. In such a case, the operator's operations manual must include procedures to make it clear:
- that all personnel can be expediently notified in writing of the change of chief pilot and the period for which the change takes effect

- CAAF is notified before the change is to take effect on how communication and handover processes between the chief pilot and the alternate chief pilot will be carried out.
- 7.4 It is implicit in this arrangement that the alternate chief pilot does not discharge the duties and responsibilities of a chief pilot of the AOC operation until they assume the role. Conversely, when the alternate chief pilot assumes the role of a chief pilot, they must perform all the duties and responsibilities of the position.