The Chief Pilot Guide will help chief pilots, intending chief pilots, aviation managers and line pilots to understand the role of the chief pilot. The guide outlines the position, the duties of, and the CASA approval process for chief pilots.

This guide was developed with assistance from several CASA flying operations inspectors and practising chief pilots.

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The chief pilot

A chief pilot is an integral part of the management team for an air operator’s certificate (AOC) and may have sole or shared responsibility for the safety and compliance of the organisation's flying operations. The chief pilot is defined as one of the key personnel of an air operator's certificate under Section 28(3) of the Civil Aviation Act 1988 (the Act) and as such must be approved by CASA before acting in this role.

An operator whose air operator's certificate authorises aerial work or charter operations (in accordance with CAO 82.1) or regular public transport operations in other than high capacity (in accordance with CAO 82.3) must have an approved chief pilot. Without an approved chief pilot, an organisation cannot exercise the privileges of an AOC.

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.

The role of chief pilot requires a focus on regulatory compliance and is a critical link between the AOC holder and CASA. 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.

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 a safety point of view, decisions made without very urgent deadlines are likely to have better long-term outcomes that 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.

Responsibilities under law

The chief pilot’s responsibilities are set out in paragraph 2 of Appendix 1 of section 82.0 of the Civil Aviation Orders (CAOs), and in future in Part 119 of the Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998 (CASR 1998), which is scheduled to be made into law in 2015.

These responsibilities are:

a. Ensuring that the operator’s air operations are conducted in compliance with the Act, Civil Aviation Regulations 1988 (CAR), CASR 1998 and the CAOs.

   » This requires the chief pilot to establish and document the operational standards for your organisation and be in a position to monitor (and if necessary correct) those standards.

   » Route checks, checking load sheets and physical loading of the aircraft, checking flight and duty time records against actual events and compiling a recurrent organisational internal audit process are all processes which help ensure that your company's air operations are conducted in compliance with the Act, CAR, CASR 1998 and CAOs.

   » The operational standards should be documented in the operations manual.

b. Arranging crew rosters.

Rostering must be in accordance with the set of flight and duty time limitations that apply to your organisation. Until 30 April 2016 existing operators can roster in accordance with CAO 48.1 or an existing, approved fatigue risk management system (FRMS). New operators are required to roster in accordance with Civil Aviation Order 48.1 Instrument 2013:

   » Appendix 1 (Basic Limits) or

   » Appendix 2 (Passenger Transport Services—Multi-pilot operations) or

   » Appendix 3 (Passenger Transport Services—Multi-pilot operations other than complex operations) or

   » Appendix 4 (Passenger Transport Services—Single-pilot operations) or

   » Appendix 5 (Aerial Work) or

   » Appendix 6 (Flying Training) of CAO 48.1 Instrument 2013 or

   » Have an approved FRMS in place which meets the requirements of CAO 48.1 Instrument 2013 Appendix 7.

Rostering must always occur in accordance with the requirements of whichever system your company has elected to use. If an FRMS is in operation, you cannot switch back and forth between the requirements of the various instrument appendixes.
An FRMS must cater for all your company’s operational requirements. It is good management practice to anticipate situations in which someone (including the chief pilot), is unable to work for any reason. Consider pilot availability when compiling a crew roster. The roster is an important plan and the chief pilot should monitor how it runs, so that flight and duty time limits are not exceeded.

c. Maintaining a record of licences, ratings, and route qualifications held by each flight crew member, including:
   » validity
   » recency
   » applicable licence restrictions.

A system that comprehensively records all the above will allow the chief pilot to monitor the operational status of each pilot and schedule in advance any required activities such as training and checking. It will also permit monitoring of expiry dates and recent experience to ensure compliance with applicable regulations.

d. Maintaining a system to record flight crew duty and flight times to ensure compliance with duty and flight time limitations, in accordance with Part 48 of the Orders.

Like the operators of any other machinery, a pilot’s performance decreases significantly when affected by fatigue, illness or injury.

Flight and duty limits and any applicable fatigue risk management system (FRMS) are set to try to avoid fatigue affecting pilot performance, but these limits are dependent on other factors outside work and the duty roster.

Chief pilots need to create a culture within their organisation in which pilots act responsibly away from work. The chief pilot must ensure flight crew understand they must present fit and rested when rostered for duty and will report as unfit if necessary, rather than attempt to fly when they are injured, unwell or not well rested. It is also important to emphasise to pilots their personal responsibility to rest appropriately during off-duty periods.

Although pilots are required to keep their own flight and duty time records, the operator is responsible for ensuring the rosters and actual duties performed are compliant with duty and flight time limitations.

e. Ensuring compliance with loading procedures specified for each aircraft type used by the operator and proper compilation of loading documents, including passenger and cargo manifests.

The chief pilot should ensure that a loading system is practical, accurate and has received appropriate approval.

Completion of the loading documentation must establish to the pilot’s satisfaction that the aircraft is loaded within its centre of gravity and weight limitations. Manifests and load sheets provide a record of the people and cargo on the aircraft and assist in meeting performance requirements.

f. Monitoring operational standards, maintaining training records and supervising the training and checking of flight crew.

The chief pilot is responsible for setting and maintaining the operational standard within the company.

The minimum standard is set by law for various categories of operation but it would be prudent for the chief pilot to require higher standards, as deemed appropriate.

The chief pilot establishes standard operating procedures (SOPs) for each aircraft type. These procedures are designed to ensure that the applicable requirements are complied with, that flight crew operate the aircraft in a standardised manner, and that the aircraft is operated in accordance with the manufacturer’s recommendations.

The strength of (and adherence to) the SOPs should reduce an operator’s risk of exposure to dangerous incidents and accidents. In smaller organisations—with a high proportion of inexperienced pilots—this may be their first exposure to the discipline of commercial operations.

Operators that are approved training and checking organisations can apply for CASA’s written approval to allow the training and checking functions to be delegated to other pilots within the organisation (see paragraph 3 of Appendix 1 of section 82.0 of the Civil Aviation Orders). However, the chief pilot remains responsible for operational standards.

For operations conducted in accordance with section 82.1 of the CAOs, external providers can deliver training and checking functions, but the chief pilot is still responsible for the standards within the organisation.

It is worth noting that other tasks of the chief pilot can be delegated, but the chief pilot is still responsible for them. Chief pilots can delegate tasks but must still be satisfied that the task has been conducted correctly. This information should be documented in the company training and checking manual.

g. Conducting proficiency tests in the execution of emergency procedures and issuing certificates of proficiency as required by section 20.11.

Emergency procedures training ensures that all flight, cabin and ground crews are proficient in the use of applicable/available emergency equipment and that they have the skills and knowledge to competently carry out a range of standard emergency procedures.

Civil Aviation Order 20.11 calls for testing each year of all the appropriate emergency equipment and for every crew member to be able to demonstrate their knowledge and execution of emergency procedures. The annual proficiency test will cover all the emergency procedures crew members might be called upon to perform.
h. Training flight crew in the acceptance and handling of dangerous goods (as required by the CAR or the CAOs).

Irrespective of whether or not your organisation transports dangerous goods, all crews of aircraft carrying cargo and/or luggage must undertake dangerous goods awareness training.

Even if you have a policy of not transporting dangerous goods you must know how to recognise them because your passengers and crew may be carrying permissible quantities of dangerous goods from time to time. If your company does carry dangerous goods, it is essential that you know what action to take to prevent them becoming a hazard to the aircraft or its occupants.

Dangerous goods recognition and appropriate handling minimise the chances of incidents resulting from their carriage. All crew members must be familiar with your particular company requirements, as well as the use of the ICAO Technical Instructions, or equivalent publication. Crews must be aware of the types of baggage that could contain dangerous goods, as well as of methods to address the issue with passengers.

i. Maintaining a complete and up-to-date reference library of operational documents as required by CASA for the class of operations conducted.

The purpose of the document library is to ensure that any operational information is up-to-date. This is the organisation’s reference library.

Apart from a set of pilot’s operational documents, your library should have company documentation and operating manuals. The aircraft manuals should be for the particular aircraft in your fleet, rather than a generic aircraft manual with much less appropriate information.

Out-of-date information can compromise safety. The information in the library must be current.

j. Allocating appropriate aircraft.

The right aircraft for the job is the requirement here. On any operation, the aircraft chosen for the task must be of appropriate capacity. That is, it must be capable of carrying the load with sufficient fuel for the flight, appropriate reserves and have performance capabilities compatible with the operation in question.

Certain categories of operation will require certain types of equipment. In the allocation task, the chief pilot should consider any special equipment required, or any maintenance that will fall due during the task. For example, if a long charter is scheduled during which maintenance will fall due, a servicing arrangement needs to be put in place or an alternative aircraft used.
Appointment of chief pilot

The chief pilot’s role is one of the key positions within an air operator’s organisation. They are responsible for holding and carrying out the duties of one, and in many cases two, of the four ‘key personnel’ positions listed in Section 28(3) of the Civil Aviation Act—the head of the flying operations part of the organisation and ‘the head of the training and checking part (if any) of the organisation’.

Without an approved chief pilot the holder of an AOC must not operate any services which it is otherwise authorised to carry out.

Chief pilot approval process

An operator must make a written application to CASA for the approval of the appointment of a person as chief pilot, with complete details in the written application.

The minimum qualifications for a chief pilot are set out in table A below. If a candidate does not meet all these requirements, the AOC applicant must provide a detailed safety case describing risk mitigation strategies for the management of the candidate’s shortfall in qualifications or experience.

### Table A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operator’s fleet type</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Minimum total flight time on relevant kind of aircraft</th>
<th>Experience in commercial operations</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single engine</td>
<td>1 aircraft</td>
<td>300 hours</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>The chief pilot can be employed on a part-time basis by the operator but must not be chief pilot with another operator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single engine</td>
<td>More than 1 aircraft</td>
<td>500 hours</td>
<td>9 months</td>
<td>The chief pilot must be employed full-time by the operator and cannot be chief pilot with another operator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-engine</td>
<td>1 aircraft</td>
<td>500 hours including 50 hours in command of multi-engined aircraft</td>
<td>9 months</td>
<td>The chief pilot must be employed full-time by the operator and cannot be chief pilot with another operator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-engine</td>
<td>More than 1 aircraft</td>
<td>1000 hours including 200 hours in command of multi-engined aircraft</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>The chief pilot must be employed full-time by the operator and cannot be chief pilot with another operator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-engine aircraft for which 2 or more flight crew are required</td>
<td>Any number of aircraft</td>
<td>2000 hours including 400 hours in command of multi-engined aircraft for which 2 or more flight crew are required</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>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-engined aircraft with 2 or more flight crew requirement may be waived by CASA in the case of existing chief pilots of operators obtaining such aircraft for the first time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An application for chief pilot should be made using Form 686 – Head of Flying Operations or Chief Pilot Nomination Form:
» when an operator applies for an AOC
» when an operator needs to appoint a new chief pilot.
CASA will not proceed with a chief pilot approval application without nomination from an AOC holder.
The application must include the following details in relation to the person:
» current licences, ratings and endorsements held
» total flight time, total time as pilot in command and, where applicable, total instrument flight time and multi-engine aircraft experience
» a comprehensive outline of flying history, including experience in commercial operations.
The assessment process has five parts:
» Application
» Desktop assessment
» Interview, including a flight assessment
» Briefing
» Administration.
More information on the assessment process is available in the AOC Handbook Volume 2 – Flying Operations section 3.4.
The briefing is usually conducted in two parts. The first briefing takes place after the CASA inspector has completed the desktop assessment and interview. This briefing will consider the results of those elements and discuss any area/s of weakness. This briefing is also an educational exercise, the candidate encouraged to ask questions.
The second part of the briefing takes place after the flight assessment and at this stage it would be expected that the CASA inspector would have decided on the suitability of the candidate under assessment. The CASA inspector will advise the candidate of the result of the assessment.
The briefing also explains:
» any particular responsibilities or regulatory aspects requiring emphasis
» a chief pilot’s role in the chain of regulatory responsibility (CASA-FOI-CP-PIC)
» CASA surveillance
» appointment and approval, resignation and cancellation or suspension
» the requirement for the chief pilot to liaise with CASA.
The appointment can only be approved if the person has:
» in the opinion of CASA, maintained a satisfactory record in the conduct or management of flying operations
» passed an oral examination, conducted by an examiner appointed by CASA, covering the regulatory requirements for the safe conduct of commercial operations
» passed a flight planning, loading and performance examination, conducted by an examiner appointed by CASA, based on the operator’s most complex aircraft
» if required by CASA, flown with a person nominated by CASA to demonstrate his or her suitability for appointment.
It is important that chief pilot applicants prepare themselves thoroughly for the interview. Candidates should familiarise themselves with regulatory references, listed at the end of this guide.

Satisfactory record
The flying operations inspector (FOI) assessing the application for approval as chief pilot must be confident that the applicant has a satisfactory record in the conduct or management of flight operations.
If this cannot be established, the candidate will generally be considered unsuitable for the position. Such an applicant would be unlikely to become suitable in the short term and in such circumstances, the company would need to find an alternative applicant.

Flight check
A flight check of a prospective chief pilot is at the discretion of CASA. 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.

Notice of approval or rejection
CASA must advise both the operator and the applicant as to the outcome of the approval process. When approval is given it remains in force for a fixed period or until it is withdrawn, whichever occurs first.
If satisfied with the chief pilot nominee, CASA’s inspector will finalise the documentation and make a recommendation to the CASA delegate. CASA will generate an instrument of approval, approving the nominee to hold the chief pilot position.
What happens when the chief pilot goes on leave?

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 CASA 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.

Professional relationship with CASA and your section of the industry

Developing a professional interface between your company and the regulator can make life much easier for both organisations. If operators are finding some rules unnecessarily onerous, a cooperative relationship with CASA can help achieve a long-term solution to the problem.

Working with the regulator avoids surprises on both sides and can negate the need for ‘crisis management’. The importance of a chief pilot establishing a good working relationship with the inspectors assigned to oversee the company’s operations cannot be over-emphasised.

A good industry network is extremely helpful in unearthing safety issues that could affect an aviation operation. A poor safety record is expensive both in insurance premiums and loss of income. AOC holders and their competitors should have the same interests in achieving high levels of safety. After all, if industry safety levels fall, insurance premiums will rise. Use your network to explore the latest innovations in safety management.
The safety culture of the organisation

The chief pilot will very much determine the safety culture of your organisation. The regulatory standard is the minimum safety standard in any instance, but higher personal standards will serve as an example to other pilots.

Chief pilots can use any method/s of their choice to meet regulatory standards. Attaining a good safety culture in an organisation may be a long slow process but will ultimately pay dividends through the reduced costs of safe operations. Remember that a poor safety culture is more likely to produce behaviors that can contribute to an accident.

Chief pilot ongoing considerations

For chief pilots to properly perform the responsibilities and duties required by CAO 82.0 they must maintain the qualifications held when initially appointed to the role.

A chief pilot—unless otherwise approved in writing by CASA—must hold a licence with the appropriate endorsements and ratings to act as pilot in command of all operations authorised by the operator’s AOC.

An operator, or the operator’s chief pilot, must notify CASA immediately when they become aware of any reason why the chief pilot is no longer able to exercise the privileges granted by an Instrument of Approval of appointment as chief pilot.

CASA 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
» loss of chief pilot’s qualifications.

CASA 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:

» when the alternate person can act as chief pilot and take over sole authority in the role
» that all personnel can be expediently notified in writing of the change of chief pilot and the period for which the change takes effect
» CASA is notified before the change is to take effect
» how communication and handover processes between the chief pilot and the alternate chief pilot will be carried out.

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.
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