

THE ANNUAL ROTORCRAFT PRO

U.S. Pilot Salary & Benefits Survey 2016-2017

In it's third year, *Rotorcraft Pro's* annual U.S. Pilot Salary & Benefits Survey was initially launched in an effort to monitor and report trends on the salaries of pilots in the industry. Traditional surveys were sent directly to employers via snail-mail in ballot form, then collected and tabulated. This old method did provide interesting results, but because employers are reluctant to reveal the exact salaries and benefits they provide, the sampling could be rather small and probably wasn't always representative of the larger whole.

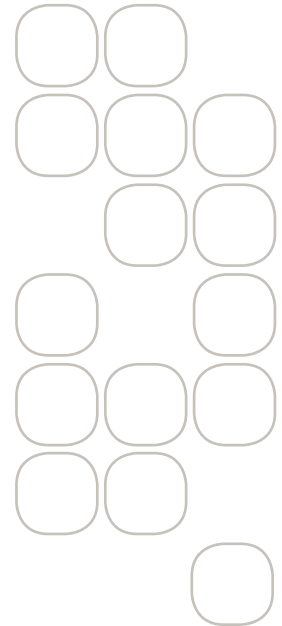
Modern web technologies have given us the ability to survey actual pilots and their employers thus generating more participation throughout the industry. As in previous years, this year's survey had excellent participation and we

have obtained some of the latest information on helicopter pilots:

- ⊙ **What are their qualifications?**
- ⊙ **What do they fly?**
- ⊙ **In what sector do they fly?**
- ⊙ **What ratings do they have?**
- ⊙ **How much do they make?**
- ⊙ **What type benefits do they receive?**

We think you'll find the answers to these questions revealing. The goal was for *Rotorcraft Pro* to interact with our readers in the industry by focusing on two main questions:

- ⊙ **How much do helicopter pilots make within the industry?**
- ⊙ **How much are you worth?**



The answers to the first question are fairly easy to gather; all it requires is collecting and analyzing data. However, the second question is more personal. In addition to comparative analysis, that answer also requires introspection. Both employers and pilots want to know where they stand in relation to their peers in the industry. We hope our results will help you find answers for your specific situation.

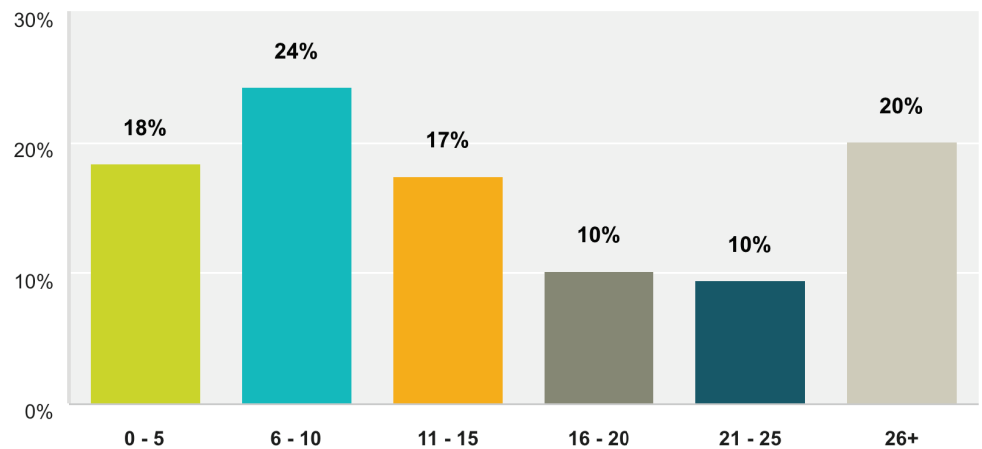
Who Took the Survey?

Hundreds of pilots took our survey and they came from all sectors of the industry, including EMS, offshore oil support, tours, electronic news gathering, utility/lifting, law enforcement, firefighting, SAR, ag/spraying, corporate (business & private owner), training, and multi-type flying. Here's the breakdown:

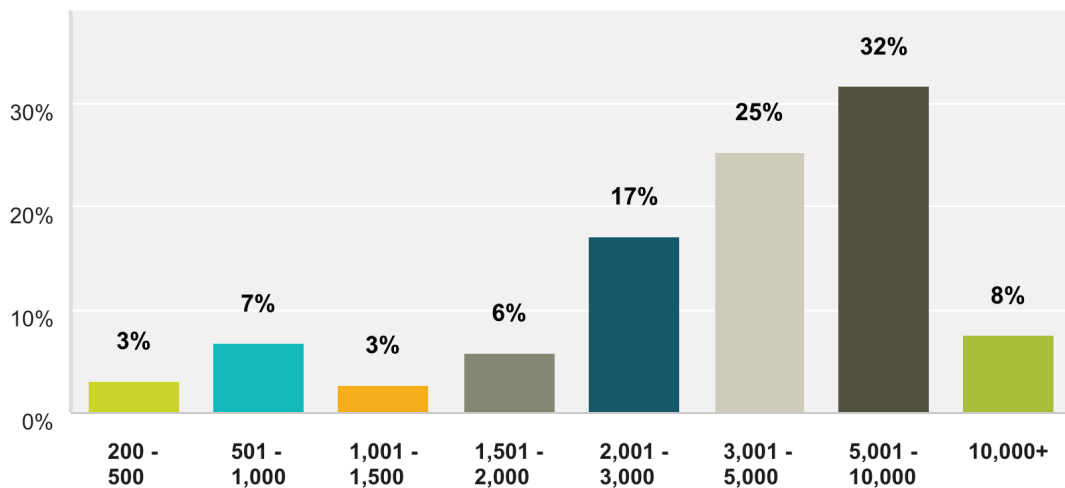
Answer Choices	Responses
▼ Flight Instructor (at primary training school)	6%
▼ Lead Pilot	14%
▼ Line Pilot	60%
▼ Owner/Operator Pilot	1%
▼ Company Training Captain or Check Airman	6%
▼ Chief Instructor Pilot	2%
▼ Chief Pilot	6%
▼ Director of Operations	5%

INSIGHT: 6.6% of respondents are U.S. pilots working as expats in overseas markets

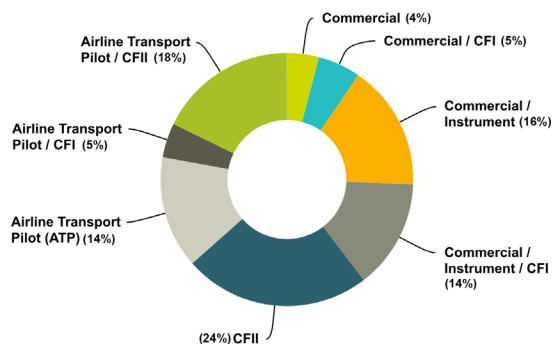
Respondents by years in industry



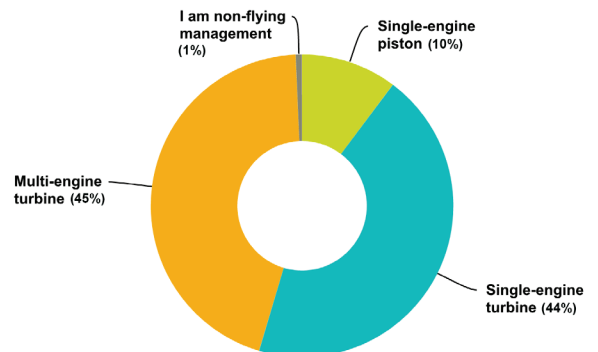
Respondents by flight-hours experience



Respondents by ratings held



Respondents by type aircraft flown





METHODOLOGY

This survey was distributed widely through use of email, social media, websites, and our magazine. All pilots were encouraged to participate. An online third-party survey company was used as the medium for survey completion, data collection, and analytics. Although personal data was collected from respondents as a qualifier, that information remains anonymous and only the data is analyzed.

As in any survey, there will be certain considerations and assumptions that must be made when analyzing and tabulating data. Some of our consideration and assumptions were:

- ⦿ This survey is designed to report 2016 data, which is the most recent full tax year.
- ⦿ We implemented the survey in early 2017 during the time when pilots were filing tax returns for 2016.
- ⦿ We assume that respondents are aware of their own compensation and benefits in enough detail to answer the survey questions accurately.

How to Read the Numbers

For any category of data, we try to consistently present three pieces of information:

1. Salary Ranges: L = Low / M = Median / H = High
2. The numerical value range is in annual USD. Example: 60-75K = \$60,001 to \$75,000 per year
3. The percent (%) of respondents in a category that make up the L, M, or H ranges

EXAMPLE: L 60-75K (10%) = Low salary range in category is \$60,001 to \$75,000 and 10% of respondents make up the low range in that category.



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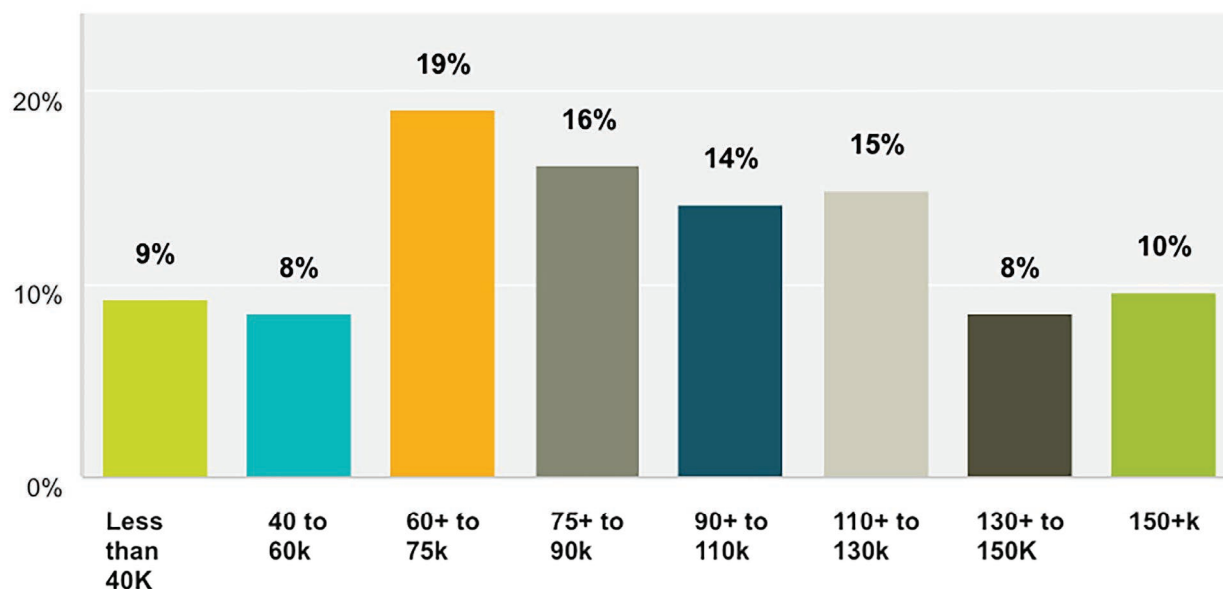
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THE SURVEY RESULTS

Salary ranges in overall industry



INSIGHT: Median salaries have risen in the industry. The median salary for all pilots responding to the survey was **\$90,000** per year which represents a **\$15,000** increase since **2014**.

Salary ranges by position

INSIGHT: In **2016**, the largest percentage of pilots in the industry grossed between **\$60,000** to **\$75,000** per year.

Position	Low	Median	High
Instructor	<40K (59%)	40-60K (18%)	>150K (5%)
Line Pilots	<40K (8%)	75-90K (17%)	>150K (6%)
Lead Pilots	<40K (5%)	75-90K (24%)	>150K (5%)
Chief Instructor Pilot	40-60K (18%)	90-110K (17%)	>150K (17%)
Chief Pilot	40-60K (12%)	90-110K (6%)	>150K (18%)
Training/Check Airman	70-90K (17%)	110-130K (33%)	>150K (33%)
Director of Ops	40-60K (7%)	110-130K (29%)	>150K (21%)

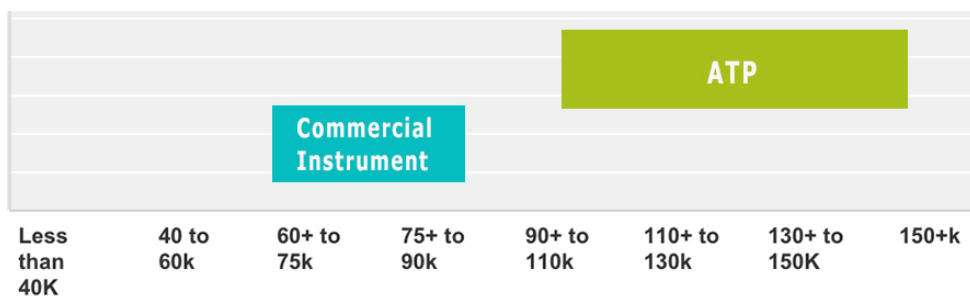
Benefits of the ATP

Pilots who hold an ATP not only have a \$10,000 to \$15,000 per year higher median salary than those who do not, but a larger percentage of them make up the higher income brackets. Three factors may influence the higher earnings for ATP certificate holders:

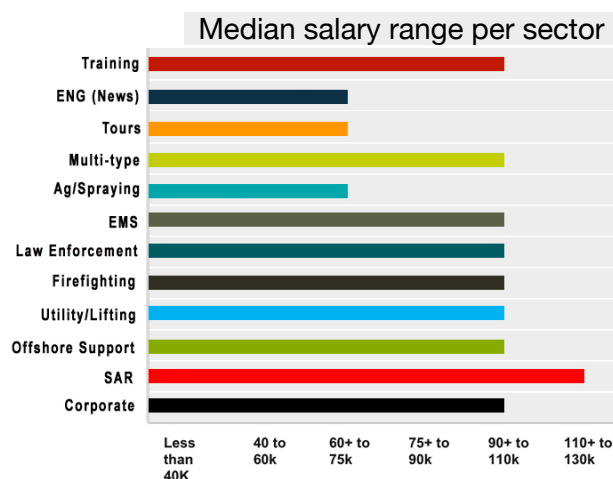
- 1) Many employers pay an ATP bonus.
- 2) Higher paying jobs generally require an ATP as a prerequisite to being hired.
- 3) Pilots may have more tenure as a working pilot prior to obtaining the ATP.



INSIGHT: The ATP rating could well be worth it! The illustration below shows a majority concentration of ATP holders (approx **57%**) reside in the upper income brackets when compared to a similar concentration of CPL-Instrument certificate holders who reside in the middle income brackets.



Salary ranges per sector



INSIGHT: If you want the best chance of reaching a salary of **\$150K** or higher as a helicopter pilot, your best opportunities are in the sectors of offshore oil support, utility/lifting, and corporate.

INSIGHT: When it comes to **single-** vs. **multi-engine** helicopters, the sooner you can get into multi-engines, the sooner you'll make more money. Only **5%** of all single-engine pilots reached the top salary range, compared to **16%** of their multi-engine pilot counterparts.

Low, Median, and High Salary Ranges Per Sector

Sector	Low	Median	High
Training	<40K (47%)	90-110K (24%)	>150K (4%)
ENG	40-60K (14%)	60-75K (57%)	130-150K (14%)
Tours	<40K (48%)	60-75K (4%)	90-110K (7%)
Multi-type flying	75-90K (25%)	110-130K (37%)	>150K (13%)
Ag/spraying	40-60K (33%)	60-75K (67%)	60-75K (67%)
EMS	40-60K (3%)	90-110K (16%)	>150K (3%)
Law enforcement	60-75K (37%)	90-110K (19%)	>150K (6%)
Firefighting	40-60K (10%)	90-110K (25%)	>150K (5%)
Utility/lifting	40-60K (11%)	90-110K (5%)	>150K (16%)
Offshore oil support	40-60K (3%)	90-110K (13%)	>150K (23%)
SAR	40-60K (14%)	110-130K (57%)	>150K (14%)
Corporate	<40K (6%)	90-110K (6%)	>150K (38%)

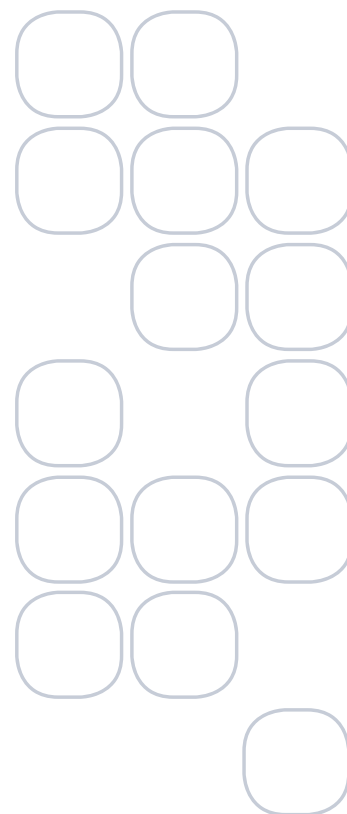


Experience - Salary ranges by flight hours

Total Hours	Low	Median	High
200 - 500	<40K (62%)	60-75K (13%)	90-110K (12%)
501 - 1000	<40K (72%)	40-60K (16%)	75-90K (11%)
1001 - 1500	<40K (37%)	40-60K (25%)	60-75K (38%)
1501 - 2000	<40K (13%)	75-90K (31%)	130-150K (6%)
2001 - 3000	<40K (4%)	75-90K (8%)	>150K (2%)
3001 - 5000	<40K (1%)	75-90K (28%)	>150K (4%)
5001 - 10000	40-60K (2%)	90-110K (19%)	>150K (20%)
10000+	60-75K (5%)	110-130K (24%)	>150K (24%)

Experience - Salary ranges by years working as helicopter pilot

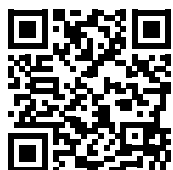
Position	Low	Median	High
0 - 5 Years	<40K (47%)	60-75K (12%)	90-110K (6%)
6 - 10 Years	<40K (1%)	75-90K (22%)	>150K (7%)
11 - 15 Years	<40K (2%)	90-110K (22%)	>150K (14%)
16 - 20 Years	60-75K (14%)	110-130K (34%)	>150K (10%)
21 - 25 Years	40-60K (4%)	90-110K (11%)	>150K (26%)
26+ Years	40-60K (2%)	90-110K (19%)	>150K (9%)



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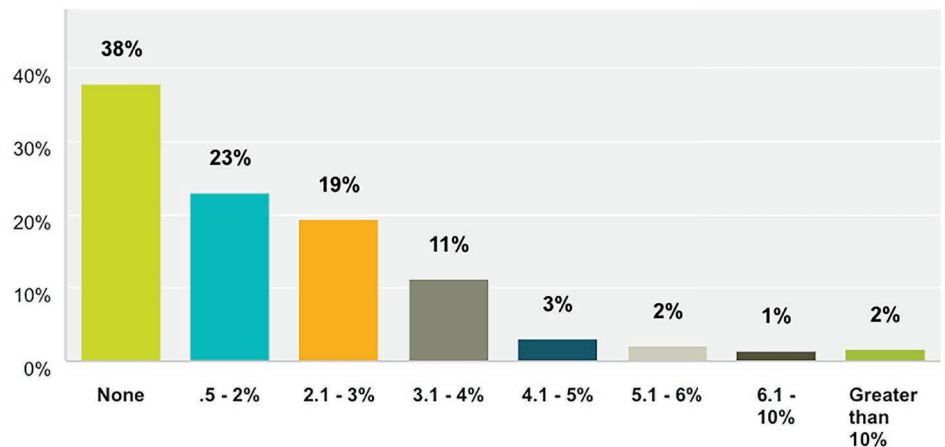
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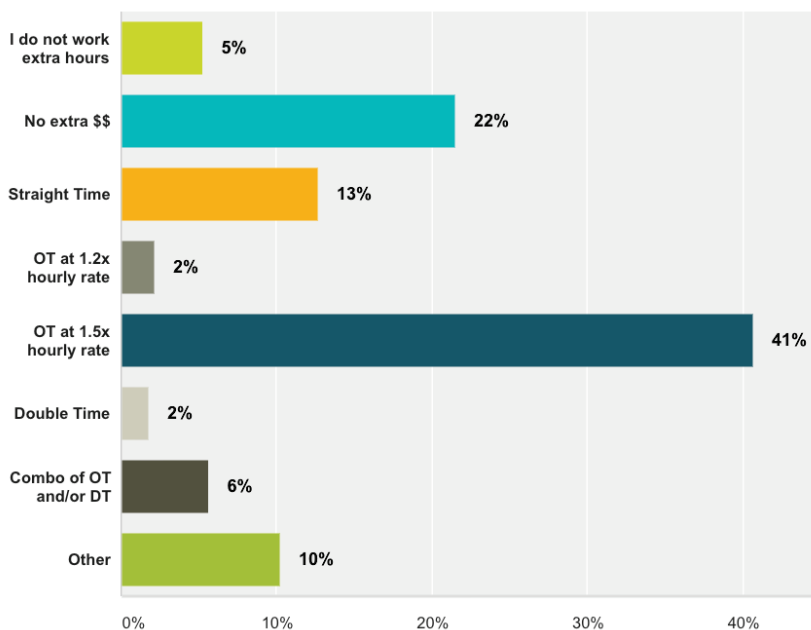
It's a mixed bag when it comes to pay raises, bonus/incentive pay, and compensation for extra work hours. The majority of our industry (80%) of our industry received a pay raise of less than 3%!

The main commonality for earning extra pay is overtime. The largest majority of pilots (41%) are paid overtime at 1.5 times their normal rate. A full 27% either get no extra pay for working extra hours or do not work extra hours at all. Whereas 13% get paid straight-time for extra hours worked. The remaining 20% respondents' compensation for extra hours were based on a variety of formulas.

Question: What percent pay raise did you receive in 2016?



Question: How are you compensated when you work extra hours or shifts?



INSIGHT: VFR & IFR

Career pilots who fly only VFR are most likely relegated to pay of **\$60,000** to **\$90,000** per year.

Career pilots who fly both VFR and IFR will be compensated much more. The pay for the largest group of these pilots fell in the range of **\$90,000** to **\$150,000**.



Health Benefits

A full 86% of respondents are provided healthcare benefits. How the cost of benefits are divided up between the employer and the employee is a mixed variation, with the majority of respondents having some portion paid for by the employer.

Question: How are you afforded health benefits?

Answer Choices	Responses
▼ Employer provided, no cost to me	13%
▼ Employer pays majority, I cover the rest	45%
▼ I pay majority, employer the rest	9%
▼ I pay 100% independently	5%
▼ Covered under spouse's plan	5%
▼ Military coverage or post-service plan	17%
▼ Federal government plan	1%
▼ I have no coverage at this time	5%



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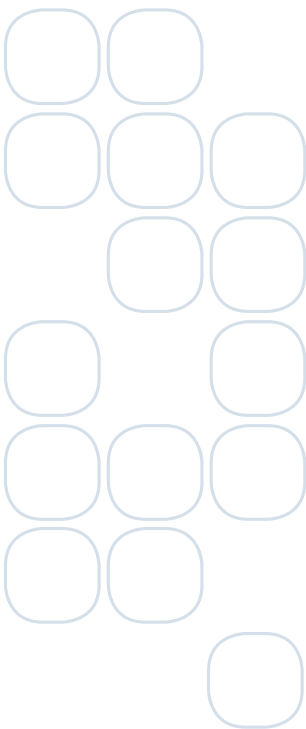
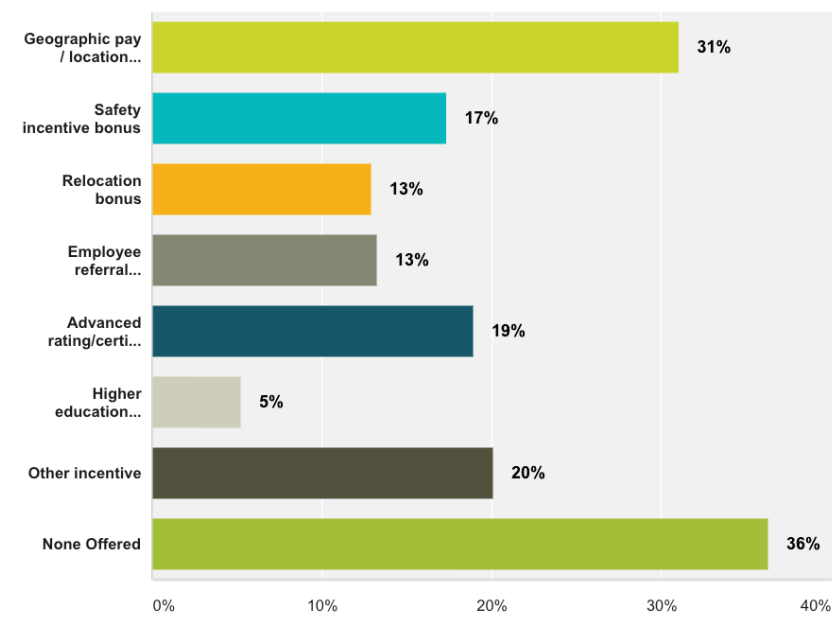
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Question: What types of incentive-bonus pay does your employer offer?



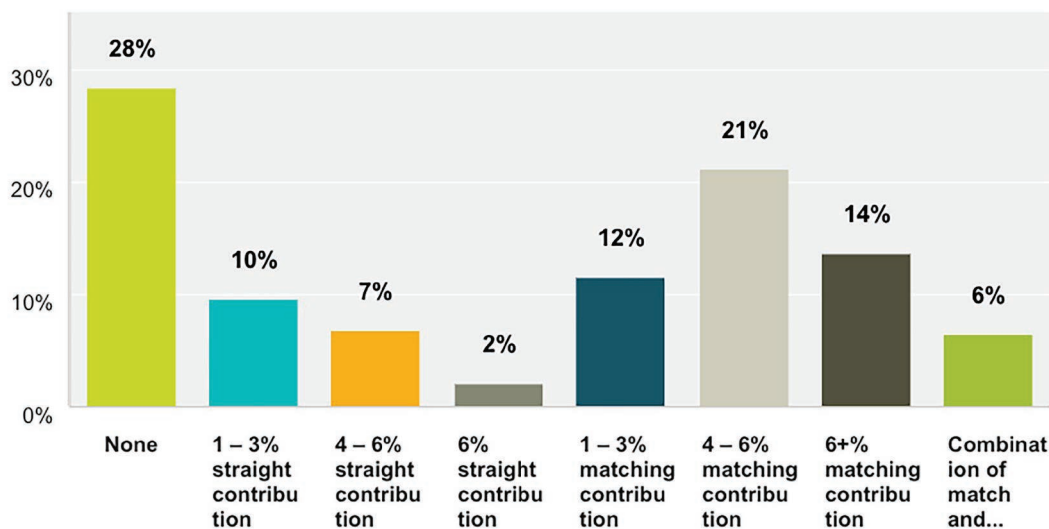


Retirement

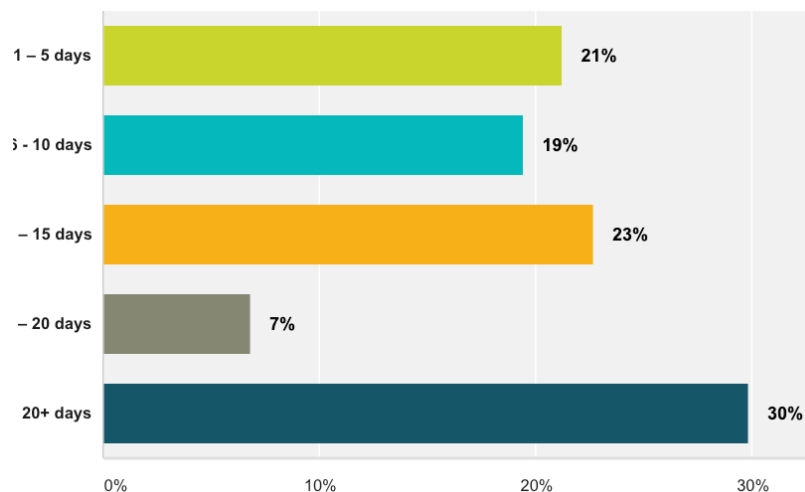
Helicopter operators have come a long way in the last decade in the area of retirement. According to 80% of respondents, their employers offer some sort of retirement plan. Of those who offer plans, 72% of employers contribute to employee plans by either straight and/or matching contributions.

INSIGHT: The number of employers offering matching retirement funds decreased by **8%** since the **2014** survey.

Question: How much does your employer contribute to your retirement plan?



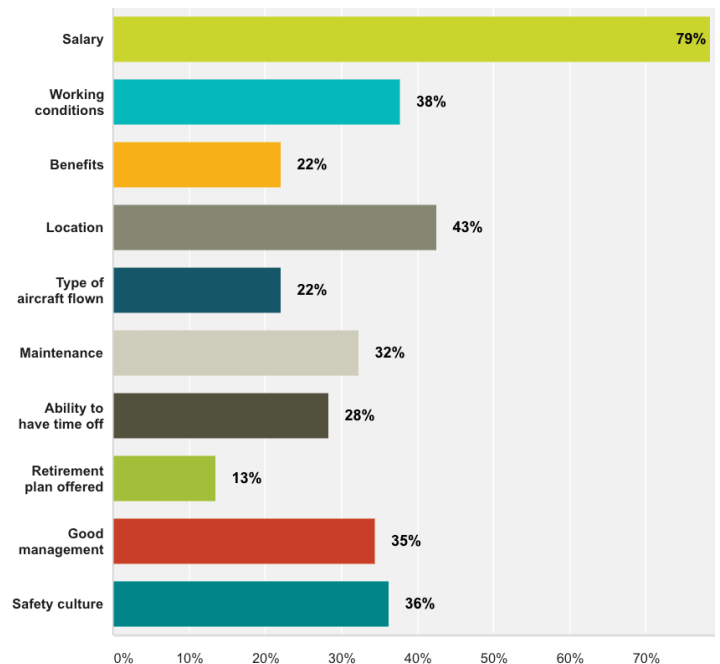
Question: How many paid personal days off (vacation/sick) are you afforded annually? Do not include holidays.



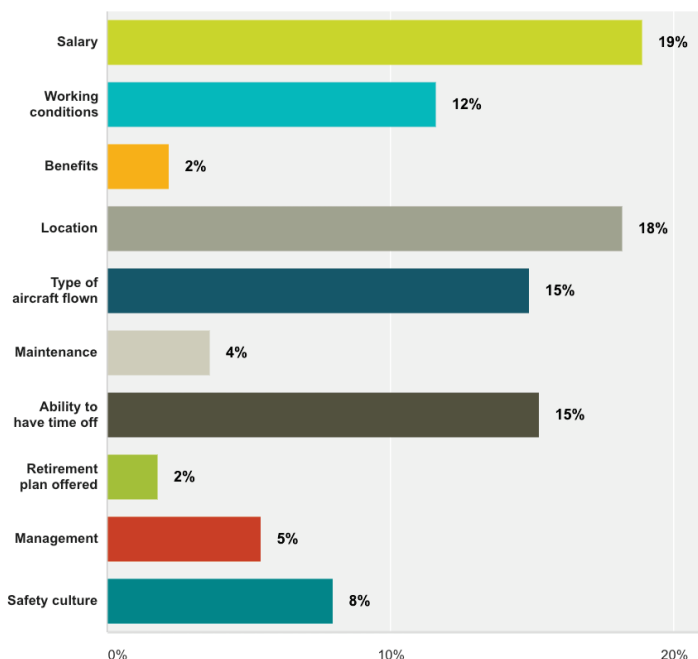
Job satisfaction – What matters most?

When it comes to job satisfaction, 80% of respondents are generally happy with their jobs. However, half of those respondents indicate that although they are happy, they are open to a better opportunity. The other half indicate that they are happy but plan on staying put for at least three years. Another 16% indicate that they are unhappy in their current job.

Question: As an employee of a helicopter operator, which attributes of the job are MOST important to you? (choose 3)



Question: At your current job with a helicopter operator, with which attribute are you MOST satisfied?



INSIGHT: WHAT PILOTS WANT, LOVE, AND HATE THE MOST . . .

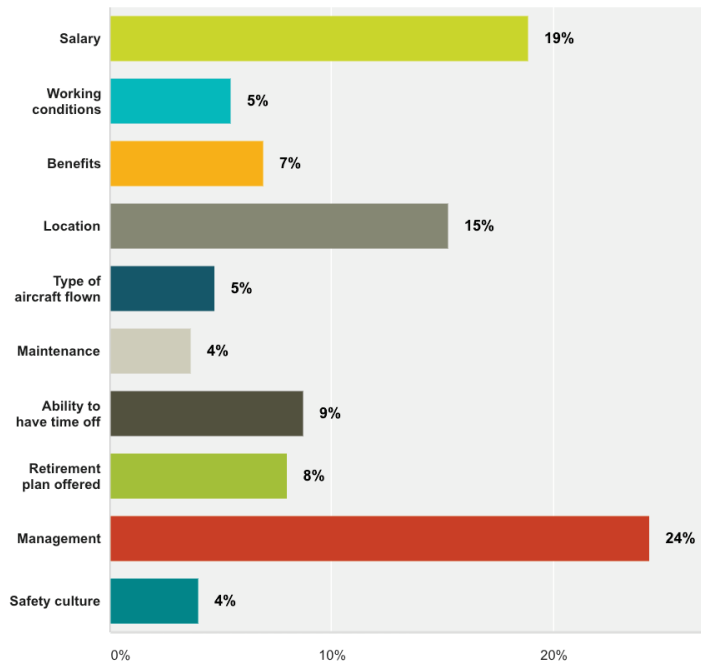
Top 3 Wants: Money, working conditions, location

Top 3 Likes: Location, salary, ability to have time off

Top 3 Dislikes: Salary, management, location



Question: At your current job with a helicopter operator, with which attribute are you **LEAST** satisfied?



So there you have it,

Rotorcraft Pro's Annual U.S. Pilot Salary & Benefits Survey. Now, we welcome your feedback. Please let us know what you think. Do you find any surprises? Were there any results that had you saying, "Yes, that goes for me too!" Keep the dialogue going by heading to our social media sites and adding your voice.

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