

ROTORCRAFT PRO

2015-2016 U.S. Pilot Salary & Benefits Survey



INSIGHT: 5% of respondents are U.S. pilots working as expats in overseas markets

Last year we launched *Rotorcraft Pro's* annual U.S. Pilot Salary & Benefits Survey. Traditional surveys of decades past were sent directly to employers by snail mail in ballot form, then collected and tabulated. This old method did provide interesting results, but because employers are reticent 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.

We felt using modern online technology to survey actual pilots and their employers would generate more interest throughout the industry. Wow, did it ever! Like last year, this year's survey had excellent participation. We again got the latest information on pilots:

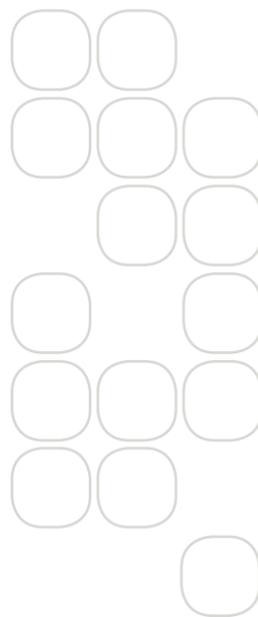
The answers to the first question are fairly easy to gather; all it requires is collecting and analyzing data. However, the second question is more personal. In addition to comparative analysis, that answer also requires introspection. Both employers and pilots want to know where they stand in relation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

What are their qualifications?

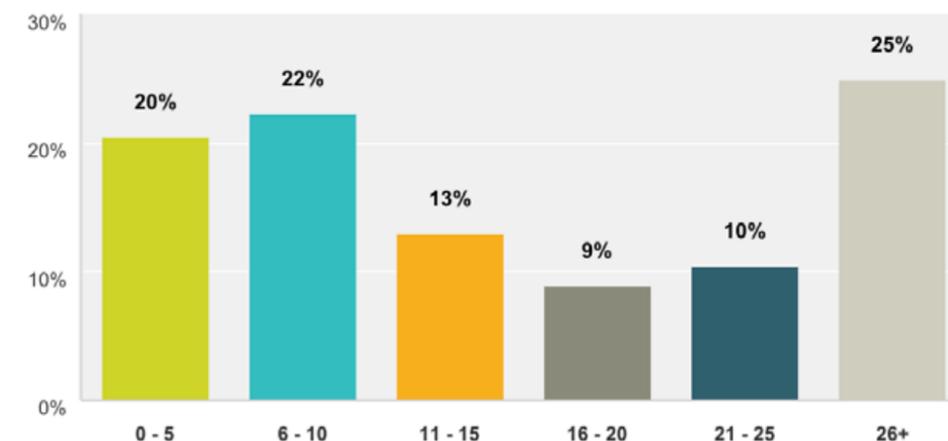
- What do they fly?
- In what sector do they fly?
- What ratings do they have?
- How much do they make?
- What type benefits do they receive?

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:

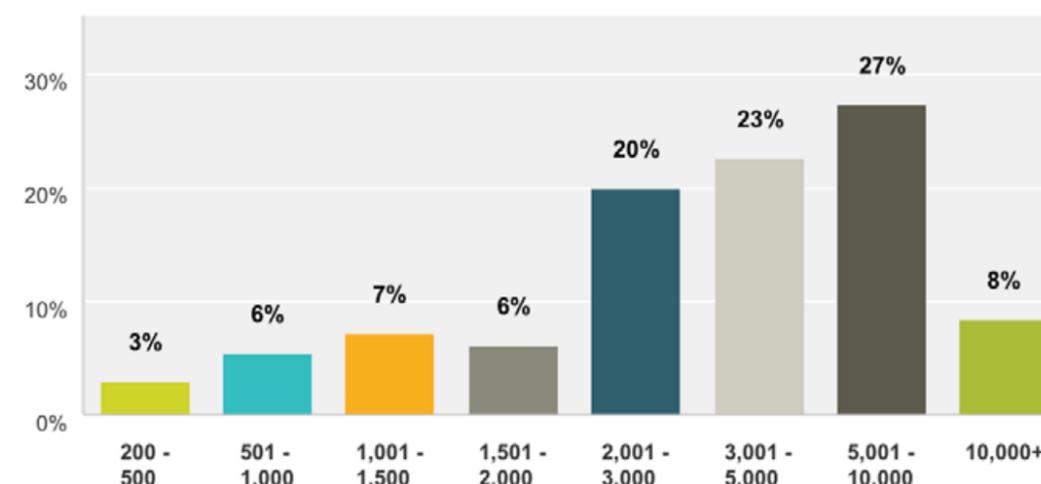
- How much do helicopter pilots make within the industry?
- How much are you worth?



Respondents by years in industry



Respondents by flight-hours experience

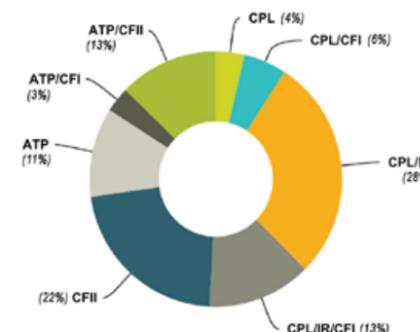


Who Took the Survey?

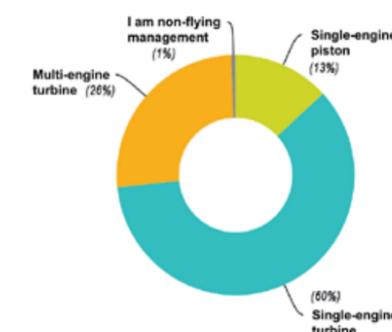
Nearly 700 pilots took our survey. They came from all sectors of the industry, including EMS, offshore oil support, tours, electronic news gathering, utility/lifting, law enforcement, firefighting, SAR, ag/spraying, corporate (business & private owner), training, and multitype. Here's the breakdown:

Answer Choices	Responses
Flight Instructor (at primary training school)	9%
Lead Pilot	14%
Line Pilot	63%
Owner/Operator Pilot	2%
Company Training Captain or Check Airman	3%
Chief Instructor Pilot	2%
Chief Pilot	5%
Director of Operations	3%

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 2015 data, which is the most recent full tax year.
- We implemented the survey in early 2016 during the time when pilots were filing tax returns for 2015.
- We assume that respondents are aware of their own compensation and benefits in enough detail to answer the survey questions accurately.
- With respect to salaries by region, due to the nature of several sectors that encourage commuting, where a pilot works may not be where he or she resides.

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

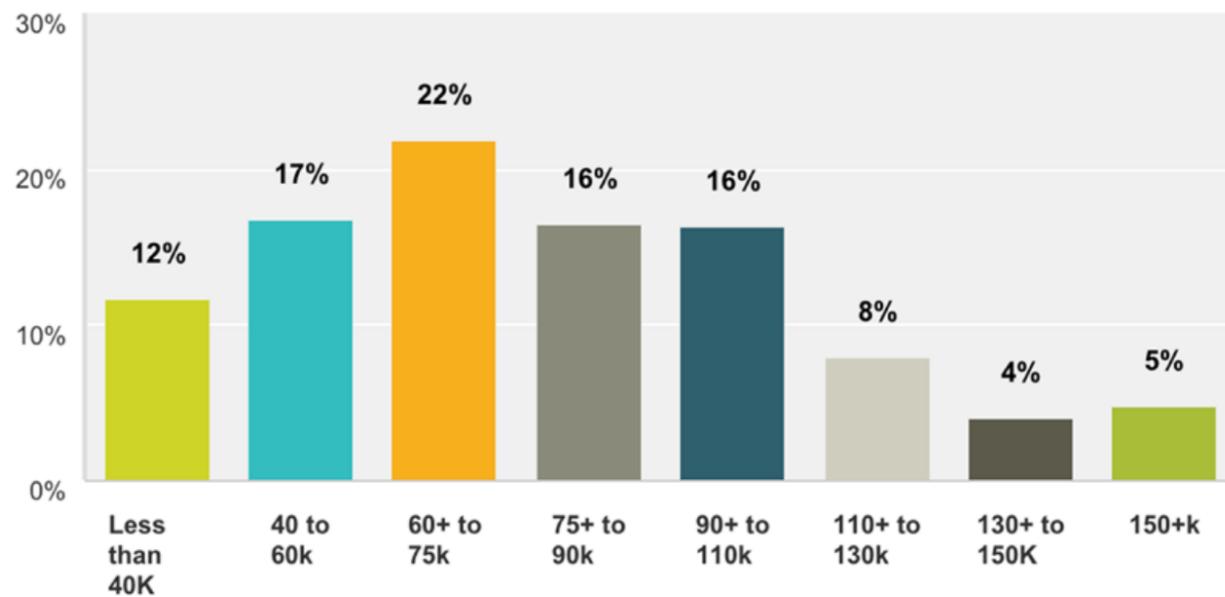
EXAMPLE: L 60-75K (10%) = Low salary range in category is \$60,001 to \$75,000 and 10% of respondents make up the low range in that category.



Law enforcement pilots have a median salary range of \$75,000 to \$90,000 per year.

THE SURVEY RESULTS

Salary ranges in overall industry



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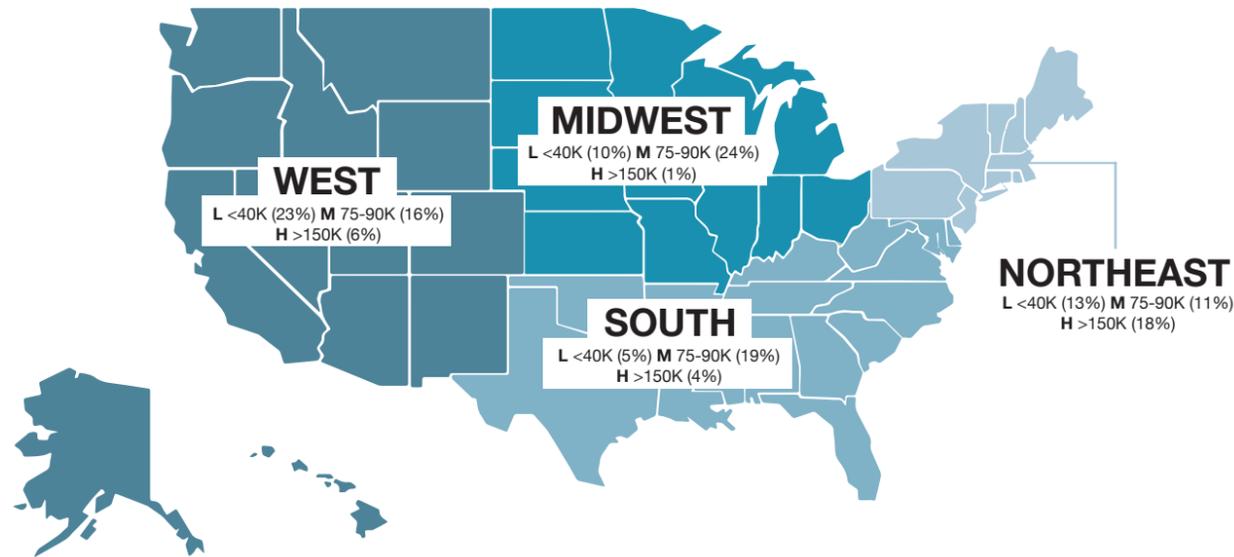
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INSIGHT: In 2015, the largest percentage of pilots in the industry grossed between \$60,000 to \$75,000 per year. The median salary for all pilots responding to the survey was \$90,000. per year.

Salary ranges by position

Position	Low	Median	High
Instructor	<40K (67%)	75-90K (7%)	>150K (2%)
Line Pilots	<40K (7%)	75-90K (17%)	>150K (5%)
Lead Pilots	<40K (3%)	90-110K (23%)	>150K (1%)
Owner/Operator Pilot	<40K (22%)	75-90K (56%)	90-110K (11%)
Chief Instructor Pilot	<40K (22%)	60-75K (20%)	110-130K (20%)
Chief Pilot	<40K (13%)	90-110K (23%)	>150K (10%)
Training/Check Airman	60-75K (10%)	90-110K (33%)	>150K (14%)
Director of Ops	<40K (6%)	90-110K (18%)	>150K (24%)

Salary ranges by geographic location

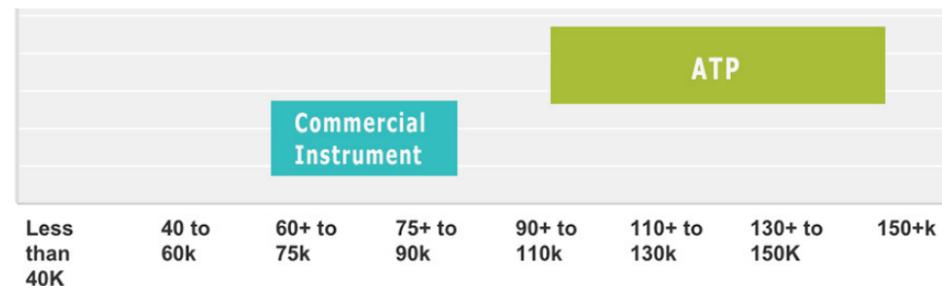


Salary ranges by certificate/ratings

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 54%) reside in the upper income brackets when compared to a similar concentration of CPL-Instrument certificate holders who reside in the middle income brackets.



The median salary range for pilots performing SAR-related work is \$75,000 to \$90,000 per year.

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Salary ranges per sector



INSIGHT: If you want the best chance of having the highest median salary in the industry and reaching a six-figure income as a helicopter pilot, your best opportunities are in the sectors of offshore oil support, utility/lifting, firefighting, and corporate.

Sector	Low	Median	High
Training	<40K (58%)	75-90K (14%)	>150K (5%)
ENG	40-60K (50%)	60-75K (30%)	75-90K (20%)
Tours	<40K (57%)	60-75K (13%)	90-110K (2%)
Multi-type flying	<40K (18%)	75-90K (14%)	>150K (5%)
Ag/spraying	<40K (11%)	75-90K (22%)	>150K (11%)
EMS	40-60K (18%)	85-100K (19%)	>150K (1%)
Law enforcement	<40K (3%)	75-90K (19%)	>150K (3%)
Firefighting	40-60K (5%)	90-110K (26%)	>150K (16%)
Utility/lifting	40-60K (24%)	90-110K (24%)	130-150K (6%)
Offshore oil support	60-75K (24%)	110-130K (16%)	>150K (21%)
SAR	40-60K (20%)	75-90K (40%)	>150K (20%)
Corporate (Private Owner)	<40K (8%)	75-90K (17%)	>150K (33%)
Corporate (Business)	40-60K (15%)	90-110K (15%)	>150K (23%)

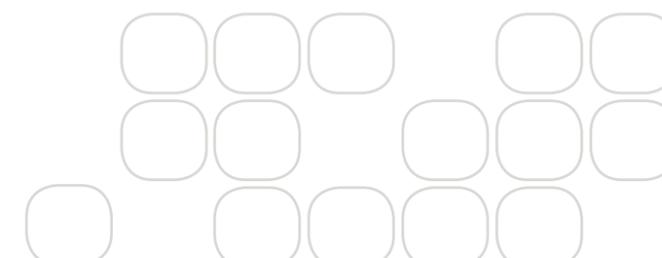
Experience - Salary ranges by flight hours

Total Hours	Low	Median	High
200 - 500	<40K (74%)	75-90K (5%)	130-150K (5%)
501 - 1000	<40K (65%)	60-75K (6%)	90-110K (10%)
1001 - 1500	<40K (54%)	40-60K (20%)	75-90K (11%)
1501 - 2000	<40K (31%)	75-90K (3%)	130-150K (3%)
2001 - 3000	<40K (2%)	75-90K (13%)	130-150K (2%)
3001 - 5000	40-60K (11%)	90-110K (22%)	>150K (3%)
5001 - 10000	40-60K (10%)	90-110K (24%)	>150K (10%)
10000+	40-60K (2%)	90-110K (20%)	>150K (18%)

Experience - Salary ranges by years working as helicopter pilot

Position	Low	Median	High
0 - 5 Years	<40K (48%)	60-75K (15%)	130-150K (2%)
6 - 10 Years	<40K (8%)	75-90K (19%)	>150K (1%)
11 - 15 Years	<40K (1%)	90-110K (21%)	>150K (6%)
16 - 20 Years	40-60K (11%)	90-110K (27%)	>150K (4%)
21 - 25 Years	40-60K (10%)	90-110K (19%)	>150K (9%)
26+ Years	40-60K (9%)	90-110K (22%)	>150K (10%)

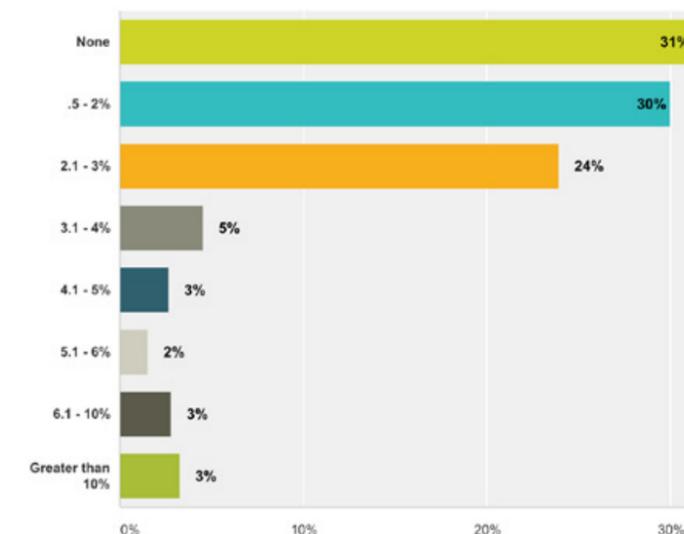
INSIGHT: When it comes to single- vs. multi-engine helicopters, the sooner you can get into multi-engines, the sooner you'll make more money. Only 4% of all single-engine pilots reached the top salary range, compared to 23% of their multi-engine pilot counterparts.



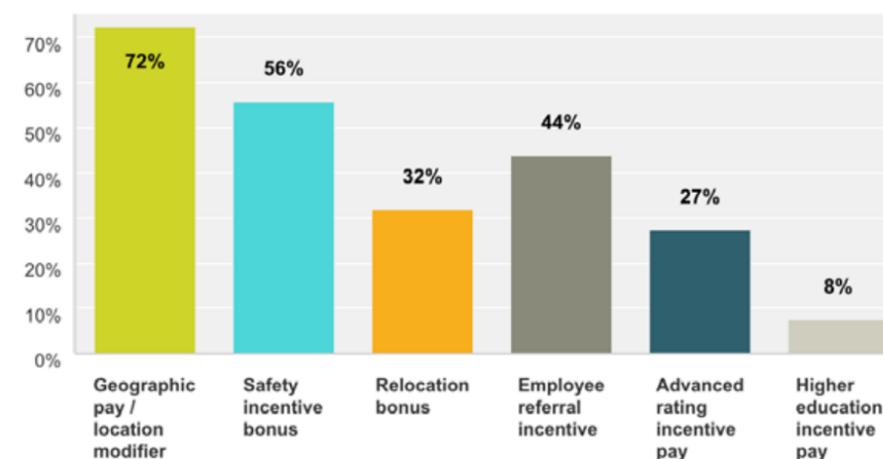
Extra Pay

It's a mixed bag when it comes to pay raises, bonus/incentive pay, and compensation for extra work hours. The main commonality is overtime. The largest majority of pilots (50%) are paid overtime at 1.5 times their normal rate. A full 19% get no extra pay for working extra hours, whereas 8% get paid straight-time for extra hours worked. The remaining 23% respondents' compensation for extra hours were based on a variety of formulas.

Question: What percent pay raise did you receive in 2015?



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



INSIGHT: VFR & IFR

Career pilots who fly only VFR are most likely relegated to pay of \$60,000 to \$110,000 per year.

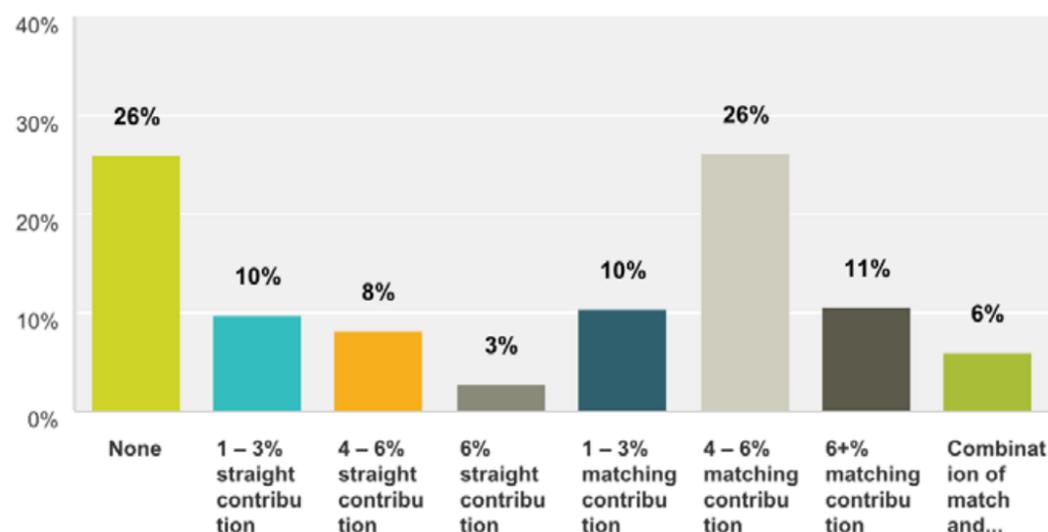
Career pilots who fly both VFR and IFR will be compensated much more. The pay for the largest group of these pilots fell in the range of \$90,000 to \$150,000.

Retirement

Helicopter operators have come a long way in the last decade in the area of retirement. According to 81% of respondents, their employers offer some sort of retirement plan. Of those who offer plans, 74% of employers contribute to employee plans by either straight and/or matching contributions.

INSIGHT: The number of employers offering matching retirement funds decreased by 6% from the previous year.

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



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.

Answer Choices	Responses
Employer provided, no cost to me	11%
Employer pays majority, I cover the rest	38%
I pay majority, employer the rest	11%
I pay 100% independently	7%
Covered under spouse's plan	5%
Military coverage or post-service plan	19%
Federal government plan	3%
I have no coverage at this time	5%

Job satisfaction – What matters most?

When it comes to job satisfaction, 86% 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 14% indicate that they are unhappy in their current job.

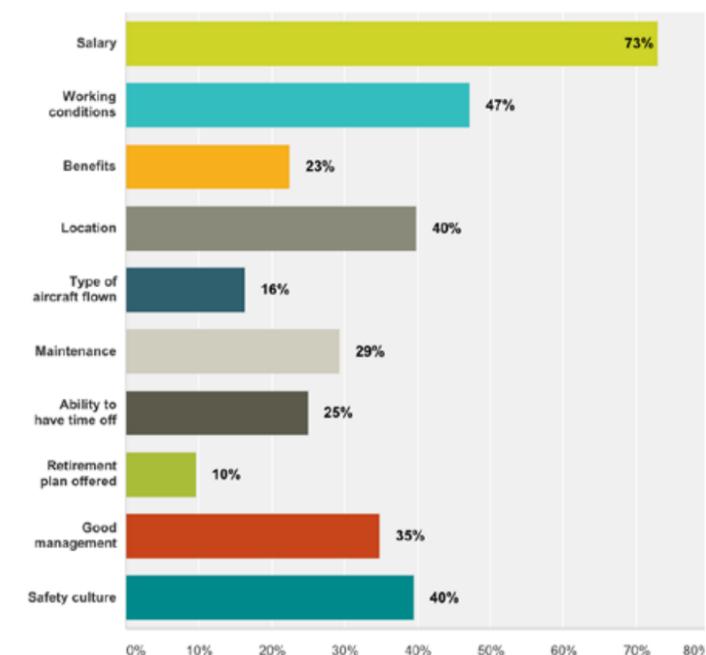
Question: As an employee of a helicopter operator, which attributes of the job are most important to you? (choose 3)

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

Top 3 Wants: money, working conditions, location

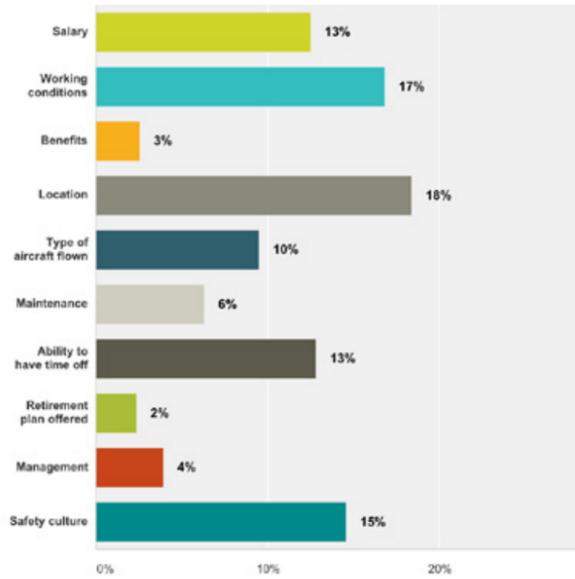
Top 3 Likes: location, working conditions, safety culture

Top 3 Dislikes: salary, management, location



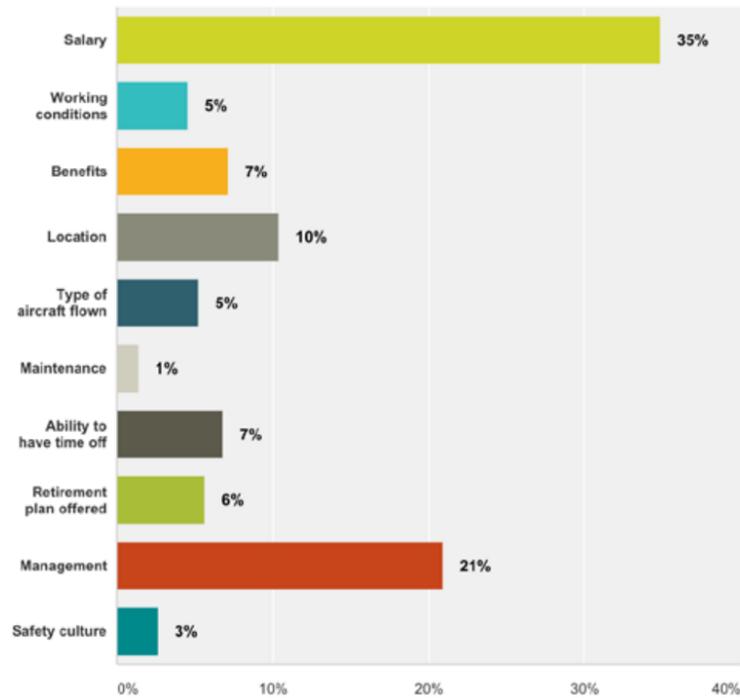
Helicopter air ambulance pilots have a median range of \$85,000 to \$100,000, which increased from 2014.

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



Feedback form consisting of 15 empty circles for marking responses.

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



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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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