

To fill that demand, the Multi-Crew Pilot License has been invented.

What is MPL?

MPL stands for Multi-Crew Pilot License, an alternative approach to traditional pilot training that concentrates on very specific training for line operations in modern transport aircraft. MPL programs incorporate ab initio, bridge and type rating training, and emphasize crew resource management and operations in a multi-crew environment. These programs use competency based training/assessment, mandatory upset recovery training, and increase the use of flight simulation training devices. The MPL concept provides an alternative to traditional pilot training approaches that date back to the 1940s.

The driver behind MPL is the increasing demand for qualified pilots. With this growing demand, training organizations need to be able to train candidates more efficiently. The MPL program will prepare a freshly trained pilot to occupy the co-pilot's seat on a jet transport after logging a minimum of 240 hours of flight time, *including as many as 170 hours* in appropriate flight synthetic training devices. MPL is seen as part of the solution to today's economic challenge, in part because the program can be undertaken with newly affordable, high quality non-legacy flight simulation technology. The requirement for just 240 hours is made possible because of the technology employed by modern training aircraft and the leap forward in simulator technology, which provides an exceptional virtual experience. This promotes safety without the need to log as many flight hours as in the past. Together, the simulator and general aviation aircraft manufacturers offer the most flexible, accessible and cost-effective training solution for implementing the MPL concept.

It's a very big deal in China and India because it could enable them to produce the staggering number of pilots that they will need over the next 20 years quicker than is currently possible.

Another view...

If you thought the right-seater on your last regional jet flight could use some acne medication, consider the veritable baby boom going on in the cockpits of some Indian airliners. According to the Times of India, there are 19-year-olds flying as first officers in single-aisle airliners like Boeing 737s and A320s and the four-striper beside them might be as young as 25. "Going by a conservative estimate, currently in India about 5 percent of commanders on single-aisle jet aircraft ... are under 30

years of age. This trend will only grow," said Capt. R. Otaal, general secretary of the Indian Commercial Pilot's Association. The rapid expansion of commercial aviation in India, coupled with the virtual absence of general aviation, have combined for the phenomenon. Otaal said Indian pilots train almost exclusively for airline positions and the training has become very focused. A young pilot can be commercially rated at 18 and, for some airlines, needs just 1,500 hours of right-seat time in an airliner to get control of the wheel. Not everyone is happy about the youth movement, especially given the sometimes-demanding flying conditions in India. "If one becomes a commander after flying as a copilot for only two monsoons, there is a level of risk involved due to lack of experience," an unnamed "aviation observer" told the Times. "One must remember that a 19-year-old copilot may be sharing the cockpit with a 25-year-old commander -- there are hardly any years of experience between them."

Ed. Observation: Pilots obtaining an MPL may never have a solo flight!