

Aerospace Careers: Air Traffic Control

FAA Air Traffic Control Specialist Flight Service Station

Introduction

The air traffic control specialists at FAA airport traffic control towers (terminals) direct air traffic so it flows smoothly and efficiently. The controllers give pilots taxiing and takeoff instructions, air traffic clearances, and advice based on numerous sources their own observations and information they receive from the National Weather Service, Air Route Traffic Control Centers (ARTCC), Flight Service Stations (FSS), and aircraft pilots.



Air traffic control specialists also work in flight service stations. They provide pre-flight, in-flight, and emergency assistance to all pilots on request. They communicate information about actual and forecast weather conditions for a specific flight, relay air traffic control instructions, assist pilots in emergencies, provide airport advisory service, and initiate and participate in searches for missing or overdue aircraft.

Position Description:

Air traffic control specialists at FAA flight service stations render pre-flight, in-flight and emergency assistance to all pilots on request. They give information about actual weather conditions and forecasts for airports and flight paths; relay air traffic control instructions between controllers and pilots; assist pilots in emergency situations; and initiate searches for missing or overdue aircraft.

Working Conditions:

Shift work is necessary. They use a telephone, radio and teletypewriter, direction finding and radar equipment. They work in office situations close to communications and computer equipment for forty hours as a normal work-week.

Typical Requirements and/or Experience:

General Experience: Progressively responsible experience in administrative, technical or other work which demonstrates potential for learning and performing air traffic control work. A four year college degree can be substituted for the general experience requirement.

Specialized Experience: Experience in a military or civilian air traffic facility which demonstrated possession of the knowledge's, skills and abilities required to perform the level of work of the specialization for which application is made. Persons with a four year college degree and a test score of 75.1 or higher on the Air Traffic Controller Aptitude Test will be admitted to controller training at the FAA Academy at Oklahoma City, OK.

At Civil Air Patrol, the volunteer auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, we're helping develop tomorrow's aerospace workforce.

Educational and Other Substitutions for Experience: GS-7: Successful completion of four year college degree may be substituted in full for the experience required at GS-7. GS-7: Applicants who have passed the written test qualify for the experience requirements for grade GS-7 if they: Hold or have held an appropriate facility rating and have actively controlled air traffic in civilian or military air traffic control terminals or centers; Hold or have held an FAA certificate as a dispatcher for an air carrier; Hold or have held an instrument pilot certificate; Hold or have held an FAA certificate as a navigator or have been fully qualified as a Navigator/Bombardier in the Armed Forces; Have 350 hours of flight time as a co-pilot or higher and hold or have held a private pilot certificate or equivalent Armed Forces rating; Have served as a rated Aerospace Defense Command Intercept Director; Meet the requirements for GS-5 and in addition pass the written test with a higher score.

Certificate and Rating Requirements: Air traffic control specialists in all specializations are required to possess or obtain a valid Air Traffic Control Specialist Certificate and/or Control Tower Operator Certificate, if appropriate. These certificates require demonstrating knowledge of basic meteorology, basic air navigation, standard air traffic control and communications procedures, the types and uses of aid to air navigation, and regulations governing air traffic. In addition, each air traffic control specialist must possess or obtain a rating for the facility to which assigned. This facility rating requires demonstration of a knowledge of the kind and location of radio aids to air navigation, the terrain, the landmarks, the communications systems and circuits, and the procedures peculiar to the area covered by the facility. All required certificates and ratings must be obtained, if not already held, within uniformly applicable time limits established by agency management.

Physical Requirements: Candidates must be able to pass a physical examination (including normal color vision). Air traffic control specialists are required to requalify in a physical examination given annually.

Written Test and Interview: Applicants must also pass a comprehensive written test and complete a personal interview during which alertness, decisiveness; diction, poise and conciseness of speech are evaluated. Both men and women are employed as air traffic controllers. Few occupations make more rigid physical and mental demands upon employees than that of air traffic controllers. Because studies show that the unique skills necessary for success as a controller diminish with age, a maximum age of 30 has been established, without exception, for entry into an FAA tower or center controller position.

Education:

A four year college degree.

Training:

Trainees receive 16 weeks of instruction at the FAA Academy in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. After completion of the training period, they are assigned to developmental positions for on-the-job training under close supervision until successful completion of training. However, those who fail to complete training are separated or reassigned from their positions. The FAA conducts upgrading training programs for specialists continuously. Training in air traffic control continues long after the specialist reaches the full performance level.

To locate educational facilities with programs related to this position, search [AVSchools](#). AVSchools makes researching and finding an aviation college, university, flight school or professional training facility simple.

At Civil Air Patrol, the volunteer auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, we're helping develop tomorrow's aerospace workforce.

Air Traffic Controller Job Pamphlets:

[Controller brochure](#)

[FAA Career Guidance Pkg](#)

Links to more Reference Information click below:

<http://www.natca.org/about.aspx?zone=About%20NATCA&pID=241>

http://www.faa.gov/jobs/job_opportunities/airtraffic_controllers/

<http://www.thetracon.com/atcjobs.htm>

<http://virtualskies.arc.nasa.gov/atm/3.html>

Courtesy: FAA, thetracon.com, NATC, US Army