

## Title:

Entering Business Aviation: Pay Rates for Flight Attendants

## Word Count:

1139

## Summary:

Pay scales in business aviation vary widely compared to commercial carriers. Overall, the field is much more lucrative if you are willing to work hard and keep your options open.

## Keywords:

business aviation, corporate aviation, corporate flight attendant, private flight attendant

## Article Body:

Pay. You know that aviation pays better than commercial, in most cases a lot better, but you aren't sure what the going rate is for a corporate flight attendant. It might surprise you to learn that pay rates vary widely depending on the type of account, your location, your responsibilities, experience, and more.

Over the years I have discovered that the pay range is not set in stone. Typically, fractionals pay less than charter operators [Part 135] who pay less than owner accounts [Part 91]. Are there exceptions to this rule? Of course. Other factors as mentioned above can play a significant role in determining what you will make. These include:

\* Location: business flight attendants based closer to major metropolitan areas command the highest salaries. New York and Los Angeles are the two most trafficked areas for private flying. Between corporate moguls and Hollywood celebrities, the two metropolitan areas produce some of the most significant amounts of flying in business aviation. If you are located in Pocatello or Burlington the chances of you finding work in the first place are remote, unless a fractional operator hires you and allows you to airline to reposition for your flight.

\* Responsibilities: So, what are you? Will you be treated as a passenger who serves other passengers or will you be expected to manage the entire cabin from the cockpit door on back? Is there a difference in service? Yes, but in the perception of the company doing the hiring there may not be. The

written job description may differ from what the job actually requires. It may take several interviews for you to find out if the company places value on your culinary expertise, your safety training, your related job experience, etc. Generally, those companies looking for someone with "no experience necessary, will train" will pay less than those who state they want an employee who is up to date with their training and has flown for a number of years.

<b>Other questions to keep in mind:</b> How often will you be flying? Will you be flying between set cities or traveling internationally? How many days per month? How many soft days v. hard days will you have per month? Will you be on call? Will you be expected to work in the office on days off? Will you be expected to "look after" children a/k/a play the nanny role when not flying? Will you be supervising other flight attendants?

\* Experience: The more experience flying corporate, the better. Companies should reward you based on your business flying background, safety and security training, culinary expertise, world languages if flying internationally, management skills, people skills, etc. Some companies require that you act as a personal assistant to the CEO. Extra compensation should be expected for these additional responsibilities.

<b>So, what is the pay range?</b> These figures are not absolute, but the U.S. salaries that I have heard for corporate flight attendants falls into three general categories. These are some generalized salary ranges:

\* Fractionals: 33K to 43K, corporate experience not always required. These companies will train you to their specifications. One of the big pluses for fractionals is that you can live mostly anywhere; at least one company will allow you to airline to meet up with the aircraft [they also let you accumulate and keep your airliner miles].

\* Charter: 45K to 75K, depending on location of aircraft and your experience. Much of what I've heard as the quoted salary is in the low to mid-50s range. Indeed, the NBAA supports this data with a recent survey showing that the average corporate flight attendant is paid just over 53K per year.

\* Owner: 25K to 100K+. Let's not kid ourselves. There are companies that will expect you to jump through hoops to fly on their aircraft and for peanuts [and you know they don't serve peanuts to their passengers!] On the other hand, if you are a chief flight attendant your salary will probably start at 75K and can easily exceed 90K. The higher salary can be expected when you have a "VP" title and be in charge of several flight attendants. Oh, by the way, don't forget that you will be flying in addition to your office duties... guess

who has to cover for sick employees when no one else can be found?

100K+?! Let's just say that this amount is unusual, but I did confirm 110K for one flight attendant flying internationally some time back. Generally, never expect anyone to reveal their salary to you... why should they?

<b>What about flying contract?</b> Wow... you had to ask. If I told you that you can expect an average of \$300. - \$350. per day plus per diem would that suit you? The amounts being paid for contractors vary just as widely as they do for full time flight attendants. I have heard of flight attendants flying for \$0 just to get the experience and hours [how could a company conscientiously allow that to happen? Okay, stupid question!] I've also heard of a flight attendant making \$600 per day flying internationally. Contract rates vary widely and depend, again, on your location, responsibilities, experience, etc.

<b>Questions to ask yourself:</b>

\* What am I worth? If you think that the job merits 60K per year, then you need to make a case for earning 60K per year. If the company insists on paying 35K, guess what? You won't make anything near 60K, you'll be crossed off their list and the person settling for 35K will get the job.

\* What will I settle for? Can I justify the lower salary just to get some work? If I have flown for years and are willing to take a 20-25K pay cut, will I be able to live on the lower salary? Can I expect to renegotiate my salary once hired [don't make me laugh...]?

\* What benefits can I expect? 401(k), medical, dental, vacation, sick/personal days, and the like are some of the expected benefits when working full time. Other considerations: do they pay for uniforms? Is there a uniform allowance? What about salary reviews/job performance reviews? Is there room for promotion? Can I ever transfer to another account? Will they pay for my training? What is their policy on job termination/severance? Is this a family friendly environment?

The more you know about your needs, wants, and desires before you are interviewed, the better opportunity you will have to be adequately compensated. Find out what is important to you: i.e., lower salary v. living where I want; job security v. higher pay; public visibility v. anonymity, etc. Stick with your principles and act upon them while negotiating your next position. One final question to ask yourself once a job offer has been tendered: can I live with myself if I accept this position?