

Airframe & Powerplant Testing Q&A

Q. What aviation mechanic certificates and ratings are issued by FAA?

A. FAA issues a single mechanic certificate with an Airframe (A) rating, or a Powerplant (P) rating, or both (A&P) ratings to qualified applicants.

Q. What are the requirements for a mechanic certificate (license)?

A. The requirements are prescribed by Federal Aviation Regulations, Part 65, Certification: Airmen Other Than Flight Crewmembers. An applicant must be:

At least 18 years old;
Able to read, write, speak, and understand the English language (with certain exceptions permitted);

Able to meet the experience, knowledge, and skill requirements for at least one rating;
and

Able to pass all the prescribed tests within a 24-month period.

Q. Are there any general educational prerequisites for obtaining the mechanic certificate?

A. No; however, some employers may require a minimum of a high school education.

Q. Do I need a medical certificate for a mechanic certificate?

A. No.

Q. If I have a physical defect, will it disqualify me from getting a mechanic certificate?

A. No; however, some employers may have established physical requirements for employment as an aviation mechanic in their organization.

Q. I wish to prepare for the FAA mechanic tests by taking correspondence courses during my spare time. Which courses do you recommend?

A. The FAA does not recognize any correspondence course in lieu of practical experience or graduation from an FAA approved aviation maintenance technician school.

Q. What is the difference between an FAA certificate and a license?

A. No difference. The FAA mechanic certificate is frequently referred to as a license.

Q. Must I have an FAA mechanic certificate to get a job as an airline mechanic?

A. No. Possession of an FAA mechanic certificate for employment by an air carrier is not a requirement of the Federal Aviation Regulations. It is often used by the air carriers as one of several hiring requirements.

Q. Can I work as an aviation mechanic without being certificated?

A. Yes, providing you work under the supervision of a certificated person and do not release aircraft to service.

Q. Must I hold a mechanic certificate to work in a certificated repair station?

A. No.

Q. Can I obtain the necessary experience and skill to qualify for a mechanic certificate and rating(s) without attending an FAA certificated aviation maintenance technician (mechanic) school?

A. Yes. You can obtain the necessary experience and skill by obtaining employment with any facility engaged in the construction, maintenance, and/or alteration of aircraft, powerplants, and/or appliances.

Q. Will my experience as a noncertificated mechanic or repairman in a repair station be qualifying experience toward a mechanic certificate?

A. Yes, providing the experience was on airframes, powerplants, or both.

Q. Does the FAA issue any specialist ratings for certificated mechanics, i.e. ground equipment specialist, welder, electronics specialist?

A. No.

Q. I have 10 years of experience as an Armed Forces jet aircraft mechanic. Why do I have to demonstrate knowledge and skill in such areas as woodwork, welding, dope and fabric, weight and balance, etc., for a civil mechanic certificate?

A. Mechanic certificate privileges allow mechanics to perform maintenance in a large number of areas. The holder of a mechanic certificate is relatively unrestricted as to working on a particular type of aircraft or to specialized maintenance functions. Therefore, the FAA must ensure that an applicant is competent to perform in the broad work areas in which he is privileged to function.

Q. I was an instrument specialist in the Armed Forces. If I get a mechanic certificate, will I be permitted to be in charge of maintenance of instruments in a certificated repair station?

A. No, you must also have a repairman certificate (the same applies to propellers).

Q. Where can I get information about aviation mechanic jobs?

A. Members of the Armed Forces should check with their service personnel office or Project Transition Officer for leads on job opportunities in civil aviation. Others may wish to write to the personnel department of any of the airlines and request information about job opportunities at their overhaul bases. Another source of information is the local U.S. Employment Service Office.

Q. I worked 10 hours a day, 6 days a week, for a total of 3,120 hours as an A&P mechanic apprentice during the past year. Since this time is equal to the number of hours accumulated by working 40 hours a week for 18 months, does this comparable mechanic experience time qualify me to take the mechanic written tests?"

A. No. Federal Aviation Regulations, Part 65, Certification: Airmen Other Than Flight Crewmembers, does not provide for anything less than 18 months of practical experience for issuance of a mechanic certificate with a single rating, and 30 months of practical experience concurrently performing the duties appropriate to both the airframe and powerplant ratings for a certificate with both A&P ratings.

Q. How much aviation mechanic experience do I need to qualify for the mechanic certificate?

A. A minimum of 18 months of appropriate experience for each rating or 30 months of concurrent experience for both ratings.

Q. Must I be a graduate of an FAA certificated aviation maintenance technician (mechanic) school to qualify to take the FAA mechanic written test?

A. No, however, graduation from the appropriate course of a certificated aviation maintenance technician (mechanic) school is one way to meet the experience requirement.

Q. I am a U.S. citizen, living in the United States. I have more than 3 years of experience as an aviation mechanic, how do I get a mechanic certificate (license)?

A. Visit any FAA Flight Standards District Office and present your documentary evidence of experience to an FAA airworthiness inspector for his/her evaluation. If the FAA inspector approves your documentary evidence of experience, you will be permitted to take the FAA mechanic written test.

Q. What documents must be presented to an FAA inspector for evaluation prior to taking the written test?

A. Applicants (U.S. citizens) for the written test should present documentary evidence from former or current employers indicating length and type of experience. Applicants who were aviation mechanics in the Armed Forces should present their Form DD-214, Certificate of Release or Discharge From Active Duty, which list their Military Occupational Specialty (MOS)

codes, schools attended and length of service. In addition, those applicants should present documents that certify training received, length of time served in each MOS code and personal evaluation records. Those applicants who are in the Armed Forces should present documents certifying training received, personnel evaluation records, and a letter from either their Executive Officer or Classification Officer indicating length of military service, their MOS codes, and length of service in those codes. Applicants (U.S. citizens or foreign nationals) who are graduates of an FAA certificated aviation maintenance technician (mechanic) school should present their graduation certificate. In addition to the required documents, an applicant should be prepared to present appropriate personal identification to the FAA inspector.

Q. What must a foreign national show to the FAA in order to take the airframe and powerplant mechanic examination?

A. A foreign applicant who graduated from an FAA approved aviation maintenance technician (mechanic) school must present an appropriate graduation certificate or certificate of completion. The ability to read, write, speak and understand the English language. Positive identification (i.e., passport). A signed and detailed original statement from their employer substantiating the specific type of maintenance performed and duration of each. A detailed statement obtained from the foreign airworthiness authority of the country in which the experience was gained or from an advisor of the International Civil Aviation Organization that will validate the applicant's experience. All documents presented to the inspector or advisor must be signed, dated originals, and traceable to the initiator.

If located outside the United States, a foreign applicant (without a certificate of graduation or completion) must show the following at the time of the application. Proof that he worked on U.S. registered aircraft or for a U.S. carrier.

Positive identification.

A signed and detailed statement from their employer substantiating the specific type of maintenance performed and duration of each.

A detailed statement obtained from a foreign airworthiness authority of the country in which the experience was gained or from an advisor of the International Civil Aviation Organization that will validate the applicant's experience.

All documents presented to the inspector or advisor must be signed, dated originals, and traceable to the initiator. NOTE: Applicants are not required to read, write, speak, and understand the English language if employed outside the United States by a U.S. carrier; however, mechanic certificates issued to foreign applicants who are not fluent in the English language shall be endorsed "Valid Only Outside the United States."

Q. If I meet the experience requirements for the mechanic certificate, can I take the required tests while in the Armed Forces?

A. Yes.

Q. Can I take the mechanic written, oral, and practical tests if I am in the Armed Forces and stationed overseas?

A. In some instances, yes. You should contact the FAA office responsible for the general area in which you are located and request information about the feasibility of taking the tests while stationed overseas.

Q. How do I obtain permission to take the written test?

A. Applicants are required to complete FAA Form 8610-2, Airman Certificate and/or Rating Application, and present it to an FAA airworthiness inspector. When your experience has been evaluated and approved by an FAA inspector, you may take the written test at an FAA approved testing center.

Q. What are the written test questions like?

A. Written test questions are of the objective, multiple choice type. Sample questions will be found in the current issue of Advisory Circular 65-2 or subsequent revisions, Airframe and Powerplant Mechanics Certification Guide, and Advisory Circular 65-9A, Airframe and Powerplant Mechanics, General Handbook. Both are available (fee required) from a Government Printing Office.

Q. What document(s) must be presented prior to taking the mechanic oral and practical tests?

A. An applicant for the oral and practical tests must present a valid AC Form 8080-2, Airman Written Test Report(s), indicating that all parts of the written test have been passed. In addition, applicants for the oral and practical test may present documentation of practical experience obtained through previous employment, or training schools, or in the military services. Such documentation may be used by the Designated Mechanic Examiner (DME) when determining the oral and practical projects to be assigned during the test.

Q. If an applicant fails any part of the written or oral and practical test(s), how soon may he/she apply for a retesting?

A. An applicant who fails any part of the written or oral and practical test(s) may apply for retesting 30 days after the date he/she failed the test. Or, before the 30 days have expired, an applicant may present a statement signed by an appropriately certificated mechanic or an appropriately certificated repairman indicating that the applicant has received additional instruction in each of the subjects failed, and the airman now considers that the applicant is ready for retesting.

Q. Who administers the mechanic oral and practical tests?

A. A Designated Mechanic Examiner.

Q. Where can I get a list of the Designated Mechanic Examiners?

A. A list may be obtained from the appropriate FAA District Office and in the current issue of Advisory Circular 183-22, FAA Designated Maintenance Technician Examiner Directory. (Local district DMEs)

Q. How much time is permitted for completion of the airframe written test? For the powerplant written test?

A. Applicants are given 5 hours to complete each test.

Q. Is there a fee for taking the written test?

A. Yes, all tests are now conducted by FAA approved testing centers. (Local district testing centers)

Q. Is there a fee for taking the mechanic oral and practical tests?

A. Yes. All oral and practical tests are conducted by Designated Mechanic Examiners; however, he/she will furnish the testing facility and can usually arrange to furnish the tools, materials, and necessary supplies.

Q. Can I take the mechanic written test at night or during the weekend.

A. Some testing centers may make arrangements for taking written tests on weekends.

Q. What document must be presented prior to retaking a written test that was previously failed?

A. A valid AC Form 8080-2, Airman Written Test Report, for the preceding test.

Q. Where can I obtain more detailed information about the requirements, application procedures, and the tests for a mechanic certificate?

A. The current issue of Advisory Circular 65-2 contains detailed information about the certificate requirements, application procedures, and the mechanic written, oral and practical tests. It is available from the Government Printing Office.

Q. Are there any other reference materials?

A. Yes, there are many good commercial textbooks available on loan from public libraries or may be purchased directly from the publishers. The Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington DC 20402, will provide free of charge, on request, Guide to Federal Aviation Publications (FAA-APA-PG-9), which provides titles of aviation publications available from GPO and the cost of each.

Q. Is there a charge for issuing the certificate?

A. No.

Q. For how long is the mechanic certificate valid?

A. The mechanic certificate is valid until surrendered, suspended, or revoked.