

# **NEW! FAA AIRCRAFT DISPATCHER CERTIFICATE**

Mt. SAC Aeronautics Department will be offering an FAA Aircraft Dispatcher Certificate beginning summer 2016 (pending FAA approval). Many of you have had questions about what is an aircraft dispatcher and how the training program will work at Mt. SAC. The following should help to answer most or all of your questions.

## **What is an Aircraft Dispatcher?**

An aircraft dispatcher is licensed airman that is certified by the Federal Aviation Administration. The job is highly technical as he/she is jointly responsible with the captain for the safety and operational control of the flight or flights under his or her guidance. (1)

FAR 121.533 states that both the airline captain and the dispatcher are held jointly responsible for the safety of the flight. In cooperation with the pilot, the flight dispatcher furnishes a flight plan that enables the aircraft to arrive at its destination on schedule with the maximum payload and the least operating cost. The flight dispatcher considers en route and destination weather, winds aloft, alternate destinations, fuel required, altitudes, and traffic flow. The dispatcher's signature, along with that of the pilot, releases the aircraft for flight. The dispatcher maintains a constant watch on all flights dispatched, and is responsible in joint agreement with the airline captain for flight planning, route and altitude selection, fuel load requirements, aircraft legality and complying with FAA regulations. (2)

The job description below was obtained from the Airline Dispatcher's Federation website (see website address below).

## **Job Description**

- The Aircraft Dispatcher is a licensed airman certificated by the Federal Aviation Administration.
- He/She has joint responsibility with the captain for the safety and operational control of flights under his/her guidance.
- He/She authorizes, regulates and controls commercial airline flights according to government and company regulations to expedite and ensure safety of flight.
- He/She is also responsible for economics, passenger service and operational control of day to day flight operations.
- He/She analyzes and evaluates meteorological information to determine potential hazards to safety of flight and to select the most desirable and economic route of flight.
- He/She computes the amount of fuel required for the safe completion of flight according to type of aircraft, distance of flight, maintenance limitations, weather conditions and minimum fuel requirements prescribed by federal aviation regulations.
- He/She prepares flight plans containing information such as maximum allowable takeoff and landing weights, weather reports, field conditions, NOTAMS and many other informational components required for the safe completion of flight.
- He/She prepares and signs the dispatch release which is the legal document providing authorization for a flight to depart.
- He/She delays or cancels flights if unsafe conditions threaten the safety of his/her aircraft or passengers.

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- He/She monitors weather conditions, aircraft position reports, and aeronautical navigation charts to evaluate the progress of flight.
- He/She updates the pilot in command of significant changes to weather or flight plan and recommends flight plan alternates, such as changing course, altitude and, if required, en route landings in the interest of safety and economy.
- He/She originates and disseminates flight information to others in his/her company including stations and reservations. This is the source of information provided to the traveling public.
- He/She has undergone extensive training to have earned the coveted Aircraft Dispatcher's certificate having taken and passed both an extensive oral examination and the comprehensive Dispatch ADX test, administered by the Federal Aviation Administration. These tests are equivalent to the same Air Transport Pilot (ATP) written and oral examinations that an airline captain must successfully complete.
- He/She participates in frequent and detailed recurrent training courses covering aircraft systems, company operations policy, meteorology and Federal Air Regulations as required by the FAA. (1)

## **Requirements and/or Experience**

FAR Part 65.53 Eligibility requirements: General.

(a) To be eligible to take the aircraft dispatcher knowledge test, a person must be at least 21 years of age.

(b) To be eligible for an aircraft dispatcher certificate, a person must—

- (1) Be at least 23 years of age;
- (2) Be able to read, speak, write, and understand the English language;
- (3) Pass the required knowledge test prescribed by Sec. 65.55 of this part;
- (4) Pass the required practical test prescribed by Sec. 65.59 of this part; and
- (5) Comply with the requirements of Sec. 65.57 of this part. Job applicants must have good vision, hearing, enunciation and an FAA Dispatch Certificate. They must thoroughly know the Federal Aviation Regulations on airline operations and be competent in airline communications and meteorology. Experience with monitoring, analyzing and/or calculating various flight factors such as weather reports and NOTAMs, aircraft/runway performance, weight and balance, ATC preferred routes, distance and fuel needs to create and/or update flight plans. (2)

## **Salary**

Dispatcher's salaries vary greatly among airlines with senior dispatchers at major airlines easily earning over \$100,000 per year.

Senior dispatchers at one major airline work 4, 10-hours shifts a week and enjoy 4 days off each week between these 40 hour, 4 day weeks. On the other hand, entry level positions at smaller carriers start in the \$20,000 per year range and feature 8 hour shifts, 5 days a week.

Dispatchers can expect to work "shift work" and should plan on occasionally working midnight shifts and holidays, especially when junior in their respective offices.

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Most major airlines only hire experienced dispatchers with considerable time at smaller carriers, or else selected candidates already employed by the company with many years of internal airline experience. As an example, at one of the nation's largest airlines, candidates are selected from within the company. The average successful candidate has 15-20 years of seniority within the airline with supervisory experience in a variety of operational areas. This airline does not hire outside of the company. Another airline recently hired 10 dispatchers. Each of the new dispatchers were selected from the ranks of other airlines and had 10 years average dispatch experience.

Graduates from dispatch schools will find a good job market, but realistically should not expect to be hired off the street by major airlines such as American, United or Delta. However, a good basis for future employment with a major airline is a 5 year stint with one of the smaller carriers. Most majors regard their dispatch positions as senior management level positions and require considerable experience in candidates before turning over the operational control of their flights to dispatchers. (3)

## **Opportunities for Advancement**

Flight dispatchers can move into this position from jobs as dispatch clerks, junior flight dispatchers, radio operators, meteorologists, or station managers. Large airlines employ senior dispatchers who specialize in coordinating the finances of every flight. Promotion is from within. Experience as an airline dispatcher may be used in qualifying for a job as an air traffic controller with the Federal Aviation Administration or as an airport director. (2)

## **Mt San Antonio College Aircraft Dispatch Educational Plan**

Completion of Mt San Antonio College's Commercial Pilot Program with an additional multi-engine/turbine aircraft course. (None of the general education classes are required for this course.)

This course will be an eight week course running Monday through Thursday for 3.5 hours each day. The first three weeks will be readying the student for the FAA Aircraft Dispatcher Knowledge Exam, and the final five weeks the student will be given the tools to plan flights and preparation of the oral/practical exam. The cost of the FAA Knowledge Exam is approximately \$170, and the FAA oral/practical exam is approximately \$500 (no charge for the first class of students). The oral/practical will be given at the college by the FAA and will take place during the ninth week. Study outside of class is required for successful completion. Those who choose not to take the knowledge exam and the oral/practical exam can still complete the course for four college credits.

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## Admission Requirement

1. As stated earlier, FAR Part 65.53 requires that the applicant for the ADX Knowledge Exam be at least 21 years of age, and the applicant for the FAA ADX Oral/Practical Exam be at least 23 years of age.
2. We advise that you do not take this course until you at least 23 years of age or will be age 23 years of age by the end of the course.
3. Completion of the following Mt. SAC courses:

|          |  |          |
|----------|--|----------|
| AERO 100 | Primary Pilot Ground School              | 4 Units  |
| AERO 102 | Aviation Weather                         | 3 Units  |
| AERO 104 | Federal Aviation Regulations             | 2 Units  |
| AERO 150 | Commercial Pilot Ground School           | 3 Units  |
| AERO 152 | Air Transportation                       | 3 Units  |
| AERO 200 | Aviation Safety & Human Factors          | 3 Units  |
| AERO 202 | Aircraft & Engines                       | 3 Units  |
| AERO 250 | Navigation                               | 3 Units  |
| AERO 252 | Instrument Ground School                 | 3 Units  |
| AERO 258 | Multi-engine Turbine Aircraft Operations | 3 Units  |
| TOTAL    |  | 30 Units |

(1)

<https://www.dispatcher.org/dispatcher/job-description>. Nov 17, 2015

(2)

[http://www.avjobs.com/careers/detail.asp?Job\\_Title=Non-Flying&Category=Airline&Related=Flight%20Dispatcher&RecID=72](http://www.avjobs.com/careers/detail.asp?Job_Title=Non-Flying&Category=Airline&Related=Flight%20Dispatcher&RecID=72) . Nov 17, 2015

(3)

<https://www.dispatcher.org/dispatcher/salary>. Nov 17, 2015