

All the information in this section is provided by the Federal Aviation Administration website at <http://faa.gov/education> .

Career Information on Airport Director or Manager

Airports are usually operated by a director or manager responsible either to the private owners of the airport or to the local government authorities. The airport manager must be competent in public relations, economics, business management, civil engineering, personnel management, labor relations, and politics. The manager may be required to:

1. *Make and enforce airport rules and regulations.*
2. *Plan and supervise maintenance and safety programs.*
3. *Negotiate leases with airport tenants, such as airlines.*
4. *Survey future needs of the airport and make recommendations.*
5. *Set up the airport budget.*
6. *Promote the use of the airport.*
7. *Train and supervise employees.*

Depending upon the size of the airport, the manager may supervise an assistant manager, engineer, controller, personnel officer, maintenance superintendent, and supporting office workers.

If the manager is self-employed as a small airport operator, he or she probably also runs an aircraft repair station, sells aviation fuel, gives flight lessons, and offers air taxi or charter flights.

Assistant Manager. The assistant helps the manager carry out administrative responsibilities and may be in charge of maintenance employees, airport equipment, airport tenant relations, or any of the other kinds of work associated with an airport.

Engineer. The engineer plans improvements and expansion of the airport, checks on plans submitted by architects and contractors, oversees construction, and handles real estate and zoning problems. The engineer also may direct the maintenance of runways, taxiways, hangars, terminal buildings, and grounds.

Safety Personnel. Most airports with airline service employ a few firefighters and rescue workers, some of whom may be trained as emergency medical technicians or paramedics. Airport firefighters are usually skilled in both aircraft firefighting and building or structural fire-fighting.

Service Person. Under the direction of the airport manager or engineer, a serviceperson may perform one or more of the following jobs:

1. *Cut grass on airport grounds and maintain shrubbery.*
2. *Operate snow removal equipment.*
3. *Service runway lights and replace defective lamps and fuses.*

4. *Maintain the airport's electrical services, paint, and do the general carpentry work required for small repair jobs.*

Terminal Concessionaire. Airports that are served by airlines provide such services as restaurants, newsstands, gift and book shops, car rental agencies, and skycap baggage service. (Only a few airlines employ skycaps; most leave this service to terminal concessions.) Workers in the airport flight kitchens cater to airlines that do not have their own flight kitchens. While not on the airport manager's staff, workers in the concessions are mentioned here because they have a place in the total employment picture of the airport.

Fixed Base Operator (FBO). A fixed base operator is a retail firm that sells general aviation products or services at an airport. The FBO may employ one or two people or may have a hundred workers. One or more of the following services are offered: fueling; aircraft, avionics and/or instrument sales and service; flight training; air taxi service and charter flights; and aircraft exterior and/or interior modification.

Depending on the size and scope of the airport's operations, the FBO employs aviation mechanics, flight instructors, and aircraft salesperson. It also may employ a licensed aviation mechanic to train and supervise mechanics. FBO personnel will often arrange for ground transportation and overnight accommodations for general aviation pilots and their passengers.

Lineperson. The fixed base operator employs linepersons or ramp servicepersons who meet arriving aircraft, guide them to parking spots, assist pilots in securing their aircraft, and otherwise serve the general aviation and airline customers. Linepersons also fuel and service aircraft and report to the aircraft owners any signs of incipient trouble with their planes, such as fluid leaks.

Linepersons are frequently young people who are interested in aviation and begin their aviation careers by building up experience with aircraft under the guidance of a fixed base operator. They are usually paid an hourly rate and often work part-time after school hours, on weekends, and summers. With their earnings, they can fly or take up an aviation mechanic's trade. The lineperson's job is an important basic career development step and can lead to many aviation careers.

Other personnel who work either for the FBO or airport manager include accountant/bookkeepers, secretaries, and typists. Salaries, qualifications, and training opportunities are the same as for other workers in these areas of employment.