BEYOND THE SURVEY · NBAA-BACE 2026

# Before You Benchmark: Job Description Prep Sheet

Compensation surveys match jobs by description, not title. Use these five steps with HR to make sure the pay data you use fits the job you actually have.

## 1 Start with the work, not the title

Write down what the person does today. Titles drift over time, and the same title means different jobs from one flight department to the next.

## 2 Capture what's below the waterline

- ☐ Reports to (title and level)
- ☐ Budget responsibility
- ☐ Flying: none, limited or a full line schedule
- ☐ Safety or SMS role
- ☐ Time with executives or owners
- ☐ Exempt or non-exempt status
- ☐ Direct reports (number and roles)
- ☐ Fleet (aircraft types and number)
- ☐ Required certificates (ATP, A&P, IA, FCC, CAM)
- ☐ Facilities, security and capital purchases
- ☐ Schedule, travel and on-call expectations
- ☐ Succession: who could step in tomorrow

## 3 Match each survey by description

Read each survey's job definition before you pick a match. The same title can mean very different things. Watch for these common mismatches:

| JOB | WHERE SURVEYS COMMONLY DIFFER |
|---|---|
| **Director of aviation** | Some surveys split flying and non-flying directors into separate titles. Others use one title for both. Check whether flying hours are built into the definition. |
| **Director, manager or chief of maintenance** | Make sure the title fits your level in the organization. |
| **Captain, senior captain or assistant chief pilot** | Criteria for these grades can vary between surveys and sometimes can be arbitrary in some organizations. Some form of increased responsibility should accompany promotion from captain. |

## 4 Bring HR in early

- ? Which surveys do we use, and which title do we match each job to?
- ? When did we last update this job description?
- ? Is pay tied to the job description, the title or both?
- ? Are we comparing to aviation surveys or general industry data?

## 5 Review it whenever the job changes

Update the description when you add an aircraft type, a base or direct reports; when flying hours change; when the role picks up safety, security or facilities duties; and at least once a year.

**Join the surveys.** Participation in aviation compensation surveys has been falling. Better benchmarks for everyone start with more flight departments in the data.

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