

Training Considerations for Return to Operations

As operations begin to return to normal, there will be a need to re-establish compliance with the ICAO Standards as interpreted in each State's regulations. This needs to be done in a safe and efficient manner. The resumption of operations presents many challenges including the requalification and training of pilots.

For those pilots who have been away from active line flying, there is a need to ensure not only that they are fully qualified, but also that they regain proficiency and confidence before returning to line operations.

Pilots returning to the line must be: Qualified, Proficient, and Confident

- The Regulatory Authority will establish the definition of **Qualified**
- The operator and pilot share the responsibility to ensure that the pilot is **Proficient**
- The pilots must be **Confident** that they are able to properly perform their duties

The minimum training required to re-qualify a pilot to the regulatory standard may not be sufficient following either a break in operational status or loss of qualification due to the COVID-19 crisis. Operators must be prepared to provide training above the minimum required by the regulatory authority.

In the event that a pilot is considered both Qualified and Proficient, yet that pilot believes that they would benefit from some level of training to ensure Confidence prior to being released to line operations, that pilot should be afforded appropriate training based on their individual circumstance.

There will be a variety of situations that must be considered. Each situation will require a slightly different curriculum for requalification. For example:

1. Qualified and current with little or no break in operational flying.
2. Qualified and current but with an extended break in operational flying.

3. Qualified per point #1 or #2 above but operating under regulatory extension or exemption.
4. Loss or recency (3 takeoff/landings in 90 days)
5. Loss or qualification requiring training/checking
 - a. Loss of qualification of less than 6 months
 - b. Loss of qualification for 6-12 months

There must be recognition of the individual situation, including varying levels of pilot experience, in the application of these requalification requirements. A long serving, experienced pilot may require minimal training while a relatively new pilot with a lower level of experience may require additional training over the minimum. To ensure that pilots returning to operational status after a break are sufficiently confident in their ability to perform their duties, operators should allow pilots the opportunity to request additional training over and above the normal or expected training footprint.

TRAINING PLANNING

- Pilots must receive sufficient notice of intended training to properly prepare for the training.
- Individual pilots are encouraged to maintain a disciplined approach to self-study while preparing to return to requalify. Operators should provide pilots with the appropriate material and tools to facilitate their self-study. For example: distributed learning bulletins and access to computer based training programmes via web based platforms.
- It is recognized that there will be an increased burden to airlines' training departments. While it is important that training be designed and conducted efficiently, it is critical that the training is not rushed and its quality is not compromised.
- Training pilots and examiners or check pilots may be affected by lapsed qualifications or may be operating under regulatory extension or alleviations. Operators should plan to requalify training pilots and examiners/check pilots who may have also lost their qualification as early as possible.
- All temporary modifications to training requirements and practices due to COVID-19 must include an end date or identify the conditions after which training will revert to the normal process.
- Some pilots have had employment terminated temporarily (layoff/furlough). Operators must consider the recall process and period required when scheduling training.

CURRICULUM

- A matrix of requalification categories should be developed to enable a standardized curriculum to be developed for those pilots in each category.
- Many operators have already established curricula used to requalify pilots returning from short term absences. Operators are encouraged to use these curricula as a basis for developing additional training for returning pilots.
- The emphasis in designing and delivering the curriculum must be on training as opposed to checking.
- Training curriculum should include both a predetermined minimum number of training periods and/or training hours as well as predetermined standards of competency and proficiency.
- All requalification training should start with a standardized baseline requalification curriculum that is specific to the requalification category of the pilot. Flexibility should be built into the curriculum to allow minor modifications in the form of additional training requirements that may be unique to an individual pilot.
- The training curriculum should allow extra time for pilot-requested practice.

TRAINING DELIVERY

- All requalification training should be done in a full crew environment (Captain/First Officer).
- All training must be conducted by an instructor who is appropriately qualified under the normal regulatory structure.
- All training and checking must be conducted by the operator's own instructors and/or examiners.
- Requalification training and checking must be completed in an appropriate level of flight simulation training device (FSTD) as required by regulation. There should be no regulatory waivers to allow training on a lower level training device than would normally be allowed nor should on-aeroplane training be conducted when it would not normally be.
- When using a Full Flight Simulator, motion should be used for all refresher training.
- Training should ensure an opportunity for pilots to practice manual handling skills in multiple scenarios.
- If only regaining recency (3 Takeoff/Landings in 90 days) is required, it may be completed on aeroplane if permitted by State regulation.
- A list of changes in company operations; for example - SOP changes, that have taken place during the pilot absence should be available for the pilot when the training starts.

TRANSITION TO LINE OPERATIONS¹

- Pilots should initially be rostered with a line training Captain or examiner for initial re-exposure to normal line operations.
- Pilots requiring a Line Check who have not flown for 90 days or more should be afforded a minimum of two sectors of Flying Under Supervision prior to having a Line Check administered.
- Operators must be vigilant in informing pilots of any operational changes that may affect line operations. Likewise, pilots must be aware that there may be significant changes to operational procedures in a post COVID-19 world. Pilots should be aware of these possibilities and should be prepared to adapt and manage these situations as needed.
- Operators should ensure awareness among crews about the operational threats from the lack of recent experience of all aviation personnel, including pilots, controllers, maintenance, ground crew, etc.

PILOT TRAINING ASSISTANCE

Airlines should recognize that individuals may be experiencing some additional personal stress or apprehension in returning to line operations following the COVID-19 pandemic. All pilots must be supported as much as possible by making available all appropriate resources such as peer support programmes and/or other appropriate support resources. Peer support programs are encouraged to have peers with expertise in pilot training available to support their pilots.

Further information on Pilot Assistance can be found in the IFALPA Pilot Assistance Manual: <https://www.ifalpa.org/publications/library/pilot-assistance-manual--1572>

©2020 The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations. This publication is provided for information purposes only, in all cases pilots should follow their company's guidance and procedures. In the interest of flight safety, reproduction of this publication in whole or in part is encouraged. It may not be offered for sale or used commercially. All reprints must credit IFALPA.

¹ Any operations conducted by a regulatory exemption, extension or waiver must be supported by appropriate confirmation of approval and compliance with these requirements. It is suggested that all pilots carry written documentation as provided by the regulator or operator to satisfy this requirement.