



Mechanics Retiring Faster Than They Can Be Replaced

February 20, 2018 by General Aviation News Staff

A new report from the [Aviation Technician Education Council](#) (ATEC) has discovered that mechanics are retiring faster than they can be replaced. While new people make up just 2% of the aviation maintenance technician (AMT) population, 30% of the workforce is at or near retirement age, according to the report.

In the U.S., FAA-certified Aviation Maintenance Technician schools produce about 60% of new mechanics, with the military and on-the-job training accounting for the rest. As of mid-November 2017, enrollment at all AMT schools was about 17,800 students, but capacity is nearly 34,300.

While filling the pipeline from school to job is important, results from an ATEC survey also reiterates the need for aviation to retain the graduates schools produce. School officials estimate that 20% of graduates pursue careers outside of aviation, and only 60% elect to take the FAA test for mechanic certification.

The report notes that schools and the industry recognize these challenges, and are better defining career paths for students through innovative partnerships. When asked about formal cooperative agreements with employers, 87% of schools said they had relationships with industry companies, with repair station partnerships leading the way.

The report notes that one method of attracting more mechanics is to recruit more females. The FAA airman database includes 286,000 certificated mechanics. Females make up 2.3% of the certificated mechanic workforce, up from 1.7% in 2001.



AMT at Stevens Maintenance. (Photo courtesy Stevens Maintenance)

Other notable findings provided in the report:

- The average age of an FAA mechanic is 51, with 27% of the mechanic population age 64 and above.
- Schools are expanding programs in response to specific industry needs – 53% reported having technical programs outside the A&P. The fastest-growing non-A&P programs over the last two years were avionics and unmanned aircraft systems.
- The survey shows that 41% percent of all individuals with an FAA mechanic certificate are employed by repair stations (50%), air carriers (45%), general aviation (4%) and schools (1%).
- Nearly 40% of all A&P students are enrolled at the 10 largest institutions. The AMT school community is, therefore, composed mostly of smaller institutions, with half of schools reporting fewer than 50 enrolled students.