

# An Examination of the Employment and Wages of FAA-certified and FAA-noncertified Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians, 2001

Michael Soloy

In 2001, aircraft mechanics and service technicians certified by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) earned an average \$21.14 per hour, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Employment Statistics survey. Aircraft mechanics and service technicians without FAA certification averaged \$16.45 per hour, over \$4 less than their FAA-certified counterparts. Total employment for aircraft mechanics and service technicians in all industries in 2001 was 135,250. Because the Federal Government may use Federal certification types other than FAA for its aircraft mechanics, only data for private industry are discussed here. Private industry employed 114,300 aircraft mechanics and service technicians in 2001. Of this total, almost 82 percent were FAA certified.

Michael Soloy is an economist in the Division of Occupational and Administrative Statistics, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

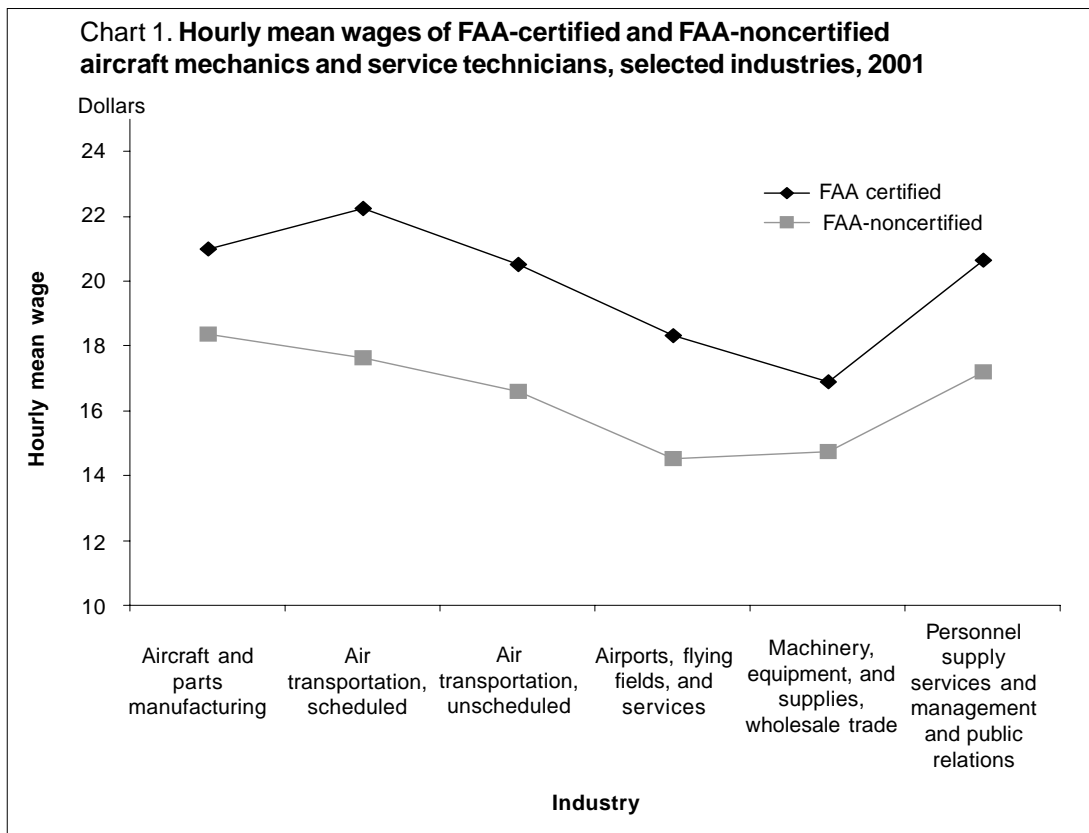
Over 95 percent of the private industry employment for aircraft mechanics and service technicians could be found in seven industries: Aircraft and parts manufacturing; air transportation, scheduled; air transportation, nonscheduled; airports, flying fields, and services; machinery, equipment, and supplies, wholesale trade; personnel supply services; and management and public relations. (Two of these industries, personnel supply services and management and public relations, have been combined for this summary.) Employment and wage data for aircraft mechanics and service technicians in these industries are presented in text table 1. The industries are as defined at the three-digit level of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget's 1987 Standard Industrial Classification (SIC).

The mean wage for FAA-certified aircraft mechanics and service technicians was higher than the mean wage for their FAA-noncertified counterpart in each of the six three-digit

Text table 1. **Employment and mean wages for aircraft mechanics and service technicians in selected industries, by FAA certification status, 2001**

SIC code	SIC name	Certification	Employment	Mean wage
372	Aircraft and parts manufacturing	FAA-certified	8,150	\$20.98
		FAA-noncertified	6,850	18.35
451	Air transportation, scheduled	FAA-certified	54,900	22.23
		FAA-noncertified	1,240	17.62
452	Air transportation, nonscheduled	FAA-certified	5,530	20.53
		FAA-noncertified	860	16.58
458	Airports, flying fields, and services	FAA-certified	18,410	18.33
		FAA-noncertified	7,860	14.54
508	Machinery, equipment, and supplies, wholesale trade	FAA-certified	1,930	16.90
		FAA-noncertified	380	14.73
736 and 874	Personnel supply services and management and public relations	FAA-certified	1,330	20.63
		FAA-noncertified	1,400	17.18

NOTE: SIC is the industry's 1987 Standard Industrial Classification, as defined by the U.S. Office of Management Budget.



industries. (See chart 1.) The highest industry mean wage for FAA-certified aircraft mechanics was found in air transportation, scheduled, at \$22.23 per hour. The highest industry mean wage for FAA-noncertified workers was found in aircraft and parts manufacturing, at \$18.35 per hour.

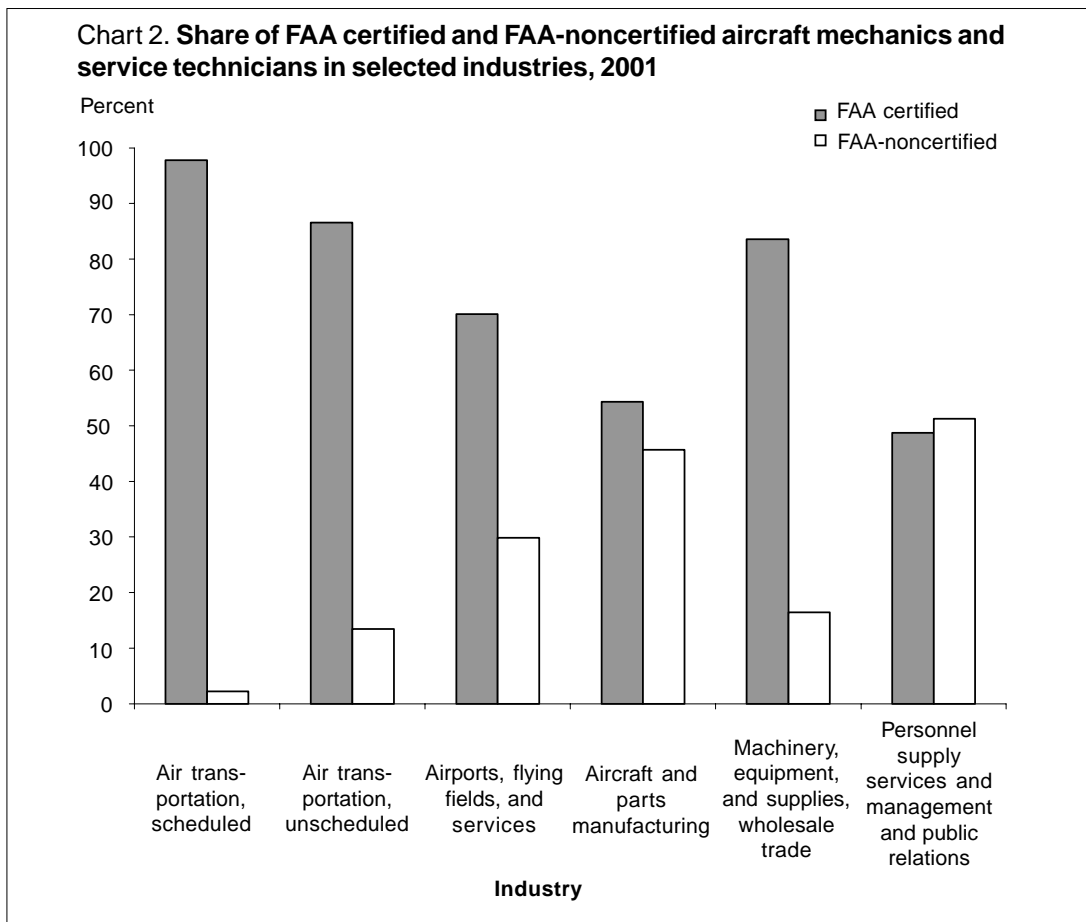
As indicated earlier, total private sector employment of aircraft mechanics and service technicians was split 82 percent to 18 percent between certified and noncertified workers. There was wide variation among the six industries, however, in the pattern of employing certified versus noncertified mechanics. (See chart 2.) The highest percentage of FAA-certified aircraft mechanics was in air transportation, scheduled, which had 98 percent of its aircraft mechanics so classified. The lowest percentage of FAA-certified aircraft mechanics was found in personnel supply services and management and public relations, in which, taken together, only 49 percent were certified.

The percentages of aircraft mechanics and service technicians classified as FAA certified varied by State. Of the 49 States reporting aircraft mechanics and service technicians, 16 reported over 95 percent of their employment for this occupation as FAA certified. An additional 20 States reported over 80 percent of their employment as FAA certified. A total of 47 States reported over 50 percent of their employment for this occupation as FAA certified. However, an examination of the data at both the area and industry levels shows that industry has a much larger effect on the share of aircraft

mechanics and service technicians who are FAA certified than does area. In States with high percentages of aircraft mechanics and service technicians classified as FAA certified, most of the employment for this occupation tended to be found in the scheduled air transportation and unscheduled air transportation industries. States with lower percentages classified as FAA certified generally had more employment for this occupation in the personnel supply services; management and public relations; and aircraft and parts manufacturing industries. Within a given industry, the percentages of aircraft mechanics and service technicians classified as FAA certified were very similar across States.

The percentage of each type of mechanic also varied by the size of the employing establishment. On average, establishments with higher total employment had higher percentages of aircraft mechanics and service technicians classified as FAA certified. Among establishments that employed at least one worker in the occupation, those with fewer than 50 total employees had, on average, 69 percent of their aircraft mechanics and service technicians classified as FAA certified. Establishments with between 50 and 250 total employees reported an average 77 percent of such workers as FAA certified, while in establishments with 250 or more total employees an average 87 percent of aircraft mechanics were certified.

Individual establishments can be classified into three groups based upon the type of aircraft mechanics and ser-



vice technicians they employed: Those that reported only FAA-certified aircraft mechanics and service technicians, those that reported only FAA-noncertified workers, and those that reported both types. Of the establishments surveyed that reported aircraft mechanics and service technicians, approximately 64 percent reported only the FAA-certified type, 19 percent reported only FAA-noncertified workers, and 17 percent reported both types. For the establishments that reported both types, about 57 percent of the total employment was FAA certified.

As with the employment percentages, these establishment-type percentages also vary by industry. Within the scheduled air transportation industry, 88 percent of establishments reported only FAA-certified aircraft mechanics, 3

percent reported only FAA-noncertified workers, and 9 percent reported both types. For the combined personnel supply services and management and public relations industry group, 58 percent of establishments reported only FAA-certified aircraft mechanics, 28 percent reported only FAA-noncertified personnel, and 14 percent reported both types.

Additional information about aircraft mechanics and service technicians can be found in the Bureau of Labor Statistics' *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. This *Handbook* includes a detailed description of the working environment, training requirements, and employment growth outlook for aircraft mechanics and service technicians. The *Handbook* is available online at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/home.htm> or may be purchased from the U.S. Government Printing Office. ■