

THREE WAYS TO SAVE MONEY ON YOUR AVIATION INSURANCE PREMIUM

BY: DAVE FITZPATRICK

Let's face it. We'd all like to save money on our aviation insurance premiums.

Yet every month, I use this column to tell you why you need **more** coverage rather than less...why you shouldn't buy aviation insurance based simply on price...why many policies leave you seriously unprotected.

Well, this month-for a change-I'm going to tell you about three simple ways to **save** money on your aviation insurance policy.

Money Saving Tip #1: Take Annual Training

Probably the best all-round thing you can do is to take some form of regular training, preferably with an MOT approved flight instructor or other experienced pilot.

Aviation insurance underwriters generally reward pilots who make a serious commitment to training. They often offer reduced rates and increases in coverage. One particular company rewards such pilots by providing aviation safety videos and special enhancements to the policy.

Aside from any discounts or coverage enhancements, regular training allows you to become a better pilot and dramatically reduce your risks of an accident. A good instructor can provide an honest assessment of your abilities and help you work on your bad habits and weaknesses.

Money Saving Tip #2: Match Your Aircraft to Your Experience

One of the biggest challenges faced by aviation insurance underwriters is a pilot who tries to insure an aircraft which is clearly inappropriate to his level of experience.

Just recently, I had to deal with such a situation. A relatively inexperienced pilot had just spent a large sum of money on a new aircraft. Although his pilot's license entitled him to fly this plane, no insurance company was willing to provide coverage. The end result was that he owned an airplane that he could not fly.

If you plan on getting into float flying, multi-engine, retractable gear, turbine, or some other type of complex aircraft, you definitely need to start by doing some research. Call your aviation broker and ask some important questions. Find out if you'll be able to get insurance for the type of aircraft you're considering and find out how much it will cost. Even if you can find someone to insure you, you may find that the cost is prohibitive. Simply by choosing a different aircraft you could save yourself a lot of money on insurance premiums.

Money Saving Tip #3: Deal With an Aviation Insurance Specialist

There are two different ways that dealing with an aviation specialist can save you money.

First, a broker who specializes in aviation insurance deals with the handful of aviation insurers on a daily basis and places a large volume of business with them. As a result, they are very familiar with the preferences and idiosyncrasies of each company. Because of their large volume of business, they're often in a better position to negotiate lower premiums or obtain coverage for you in borderline cases.

Second, an aviation specialist can provide the advice you need to make an educated decision about your coverage. Although your local general insurance broker can do a wonderful job of taking care of your home, auto, and business policies, they often have little or no experience in handling aviation insurance. The liability and hull coverage in an aviation policy is a little different and if you deal with someone without enough experience in the field you could end up with the wrong policy for your needs and circumstances. Finding out after a claim that your policy doesn't cover you can be a whole lot more expensive than taking the trouble to get the right coverage in the first place.

Dave Fitzpatrick is a pilot, aircraft owner and the President of Air 1 Insurance. He offers a free aviation insurance review to any owners who contact him at 1-888-917-1177.