

# **How to Become a DOD Approved Air Carrier**

## **HOW TO BECOME DOD APPROVED**

The requirements for Department of Defense (DOD) approval of commercial air carriers used for the transportation of DOD personnel and cargo are established as follows:

- Title 10, US Code, Section 2640
- DOD Instruction 4500.53
- 32 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) Part 861

Commercial air carriers wanting to do business with the DOD must be FAR Part 135 or 121 certificated and must have 12 months of continuous service equivalent to the service sought by the DOD.

## **TO BID ON DOD AIRLIFT CONTRACTS**

Go to <http://www.fbo.gov> to bid on all DOD airlift contracts. You do not have to be a DOD approved air carrier to bid on DOD contracts. However, if a DOD contract is in response to a relatively short-notice airlift requirement, then the contracting agency may have no choice but to award the contract to a carrier that is already DOD approved.

## **INITIAL APPROVAL PROCESS**

The initial approval process begins when a DOD contracting agency identifies a commercial air carrier as a potential awardee on a DOD contract. A commercial air carrier cannot be considered for DOD business without such a valid airlift requirement and/or contract, and we cannot accept requests for DOD approval directly from the commercial air carrier. One exception would be if the commercial air carrier wants to become a Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF) carrier. You can find more information about the CRAF program on this web site

(<https://www.amc.af.mil/Home/AMC-Commercial-Services/>). Once the air carrier is identified, the DOD contracting agency will ask the air carrier to fill out a DOD Statement of Intent (AMC Form 207). This form, and its downloadable software, can be found on this website.

Personnel from the DOD Commercial Airlift Division will contact the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and company representatives, as well as review the DOD Statement of Intent. Based on preliminary information, DOD Commercial Airlift Division will determine if the carrier has the necessary programs in place to meet DOD Quality and Safety Requirements (Q&S) to justify scheduling an actual on-site survey. These Q&S requirements are located on this website and are customer-oriented, focused on safety, and based on the best practices in the

air carrier industry. The commercial air carrier will be invited to Scott AFB to meet with our office to discuss our requirements in more detail and to help prepare for their on-site survey.

On-site survey teams normally consist of one operations and one maintenance evaluator. These two evaluators will review programs, examine documentation, and conduct interviews on a noninterference basis with the carrier. FAA principal inspectors will also be contacted. The results of DOD surveys are shared with the FAA, Department of Interior for common carriers, and when requested, the National Transportation Safety Board.

The approval process takes approximately 120 days from the date the DOD contracting agency provides the DOD Commercial Airlift Division with the request. Since previously approved carriers require recurring biennial surveys, our schedule is built a year in advance, and initial surveys may be delayed due to limited scheduling opportunities and resources.

#### **ONCE APPROVED -- DOD EVALUATIONS**

DOD air carrier evaluations include on-site surveys, desktop performance evaluations (PEs), cockpit observations and aircraft ramp inspections. Passenger carriers undergo an on-site survey once every 2 years and a PE is completed every 6 months. A PE consists of interface, usually via telephone, between our personnel and the FAA principal inspectors assigned to that carrier. All evaluations are based on the criteria published in 32 CFR Part 861.