

Types of Airlines

I: Scheduled Airline

Basically a scheduled airline is known as a Part 121 carrier in legal terms. Scheduled means just that, they're run on specific routes at specific times, for hire, and under the rules set forth under Federal Aviation Regulations part 121. On demand, on the other hand, is basically charter where one can walk up to a company and request a flight somewhere; this is known as Part 135. Corporate departments often fly under this regulation too.

There are some exceptions; however, ExpressJet Airlines flies regional routes--although the term regional is used loosely, since they fly several 3+ hour legs--for Continental, Delta, and Frontier (and JetBlue for a short while) as Part 121 scheduled operations. They also fly as their own airline ("ExpressJet Airlines") throughout the country as scheduled 121 services, however, their charter/corporate aviation division is also operated under FAR 121. Why? Because their airline is certified as Part 121, which is more stringently defined and regulated, and so are their pilots, aircraft, dispatchers, and entire operation. It gives them the ability to do more than many charter companies can do and, other than slight variations in dispatching and flight planning, it's seamless in regards to the rest of the operation.

II: Charter Airline

A charter flight is a private flight scheduled to meet the needs of specific passengers or organizations. While public commercial flights leave at regular intervals with tickets being purchased up to the day of departure by the general public, charter flights are arranged by request. They can be used for a variety of purposes, like flying time-sensitive cargo, moving passengers, or emergency air transport. Typically, the fees for this service are higher than using a traditional passenger or cargo airline, although it is sometimes possible to negotiate a discount.

Charters are available through some large airlines as well as from private companies that specialize in such flights. The aircraft are provided with cabin crew and any supplies, like meals, requested as part of the charter contract. Various aircraft can be used, depending on the amount of cargo or number of passengers being transported.

Passenger Charters

People, like celebrities or the very wealthy, who want to avoid the crowds at a public airport, may choose to take a charter flight instead. Some

charters are filled by tour companies who book the charter flight as part of a package deal that includes accommodation, rentals, and other activities for an entire vacation. Occasionally businesses, schools, or organizations will book a charter flight to receive a better rate from the airline. Organizations with a frequent need to fly personnel may find it more cost-effective to contract with a charter service when compared to other options, like maintaining a company aircraft. Using private flights can also be more convenient for transport needs that may occur unexpectedly, because the company can skip the ticketing and other procedures required by a conventional airline.

Cargo Charters

Unique or time-sensitive cargo may be sent by charter because regular airlines cannot handle it or may not be able to meet delivery targets. Racehorses, for example, are often flown by charter to transport them to distant tracks. It can be faster to charter a flight for sensitive cargo, such as important documents, perishable goods, or critical medical devices and supplies. In remote regions that are difficult to access via the ground in the winter months, charter flights can also be used to provide a lifeline for residents. Aircraft deliver mail, food, and supplies to residents by request, and also provide flights out for people who need them.

Medical Charters

People who need to be transported for medical reasons may need to use a charter flight. In an emergency, rapid transport to a treatment facility can be critical to make sure people get the right care as quickly as possible. Air ambulances can also be chartered to provide routine medical transport for people who are unstable and might need special attention. Nurses and paramedics are available to monitor the patient on the plane, provide basic interventions, and keep the patient as stable as possible before a hand-off to another medical facility.

Charter flights may also be necessary for transporting human organs designated for transplant, which have a very limited life outside the body in most cases. Hospitals preparing for transplants coordinate with surgeons requesting organs along with transportation firms that specialize in emergency medical flights. These flights may allow for direct transport between hospitals via helicopter in some cases, ensuring that delicate organs get to their destination as quickly as possible.

Advantages of Flying by Charter

Much more scheduling flexibility is available on charter flights, since the people who purchase their services determine when and where they will

fly. Charter flights are also almost always direct, meaning that passengers don't have to change planes or wait during layovers. For specialized cargo or medical situations, planes are available with the appropriate equipment to make the journey as safe and comfortable as possible; a person on life support, for example, is not likely to be able to safely travel on a regular commercial flight. Travelers preparing for conferences and similar events may consider a charter as a possible transportation option that could reduce costs and stress. These flights may also be able to service smaller regional airports, which can be useful for some passengers, such as those flying into a remote region.

Disadvantages of Flying by Charter

The small profit margins and relatively small size of most charter airlines can result in more financial instability; there have been some extreme examples of airlines going bankrupt and leaving those who bought charter tickets stranded. Additionally, tour operators or the airline may choose to cancel a charter flight up to ten days before departure for any reason, most often because they have failed to adequately fill the flight. Charter flights are also typically more expensive, particularly if the trip is chartered for a small group or one piece of cargo. From an environmental standpoint, flying uses a lot of fuel and adds to air pollution; a person sharing a flight with many other people may have a smaller environmental footprint than a single person taking a charter flight alone.

Shopping for Charter Flights

Charter flights can be arranged directly through the charter airline or through a third party, such as a travel agent. There may be additional fees associated with arranging the flight through an agent, but if the agent works with the airline regularly, he or she may be able to get a lower price. In many cases, a charter airline can arrange for a flight in as little as five or six hours from when it is requested. Chartering a flight tends to be much more expensive in general, especially if a special plane or equipment is needed, but if a group of people are traveling together, the individual cost could be lower than purchasing tickets on a commercial flight.

Public Charter Flights

While in the past, it was necessary to charter an entire plane, in recent years some groups have started chartering flights and opening up ticket sales to the general public. A company might charter a flight to a major tourist destination a few times a season, for example, or for a sporting event. Such flights usually have much stricter cancellation penalties than

comparable commercial flights, often with little or no refund. People buying tickets for individual seats on public charter flights also usually have less flexibility, because the sales are dependent on which flights have open seats that need to be filled. Prices on these flights are often low, however, especially as the departure date nears and the airline works to fill the plane.

III: Low-cost Airline

A low-cost carrier or low-cost airline (also known as a *no-frills*, *discount* or *budget* carrier or airline or *cheap flight*) is an airline that generally has lower fares and fewer comforts. To make up for revenue lost in decreased ticket prices, the airline may charge for extras like food, priority boarding, seat allocating, and baggage etc.

The term originated within the airline industry referring to airlines with a lower operating cost structure than their competitors. While the term is often applied to any carrier with low ticket prices and limited services, regardless of their operating models, low-cost carriers should not be confused with regional airlines that operate short flights without service, or with full-service airlines offering some reduced fares.

In due course, some airlines have actively sought to market and advertise themselves as low-cost, budget, or discount airlines while maintaining products usually associated with traditional mainline carrier's services which often result in increased operational complexity. Among these products which tend increase complexity to reduce efficiency are preferred or assigned seating, catering other items rather than basic beverages, differentiated premium cabins, satellite or ground based Wi-Fi internet, and in-flight audio video entertainment. As such by advertising themselves as low-cost, this branch and category of airlines seek to gain a competitive marketing advantage over other similarly priced air transportation carrier's products; even though in actuality fare prices for the passenger may be parallel to other airline options due to the associated add-on fees low-cost, discount, or budget; are increasingly accessing travelers to appear less expensive than traditional network or airline alliance linked carriers.