Building career resilience in aviation



aviationjobsearch

Let’s future proof your career

Aviation is a career you build year by year - licences earned, ratings added, type endorsements accumulated, hours logged. For many people, it becomes as much a professional identity as it does a job.

That’s what makes the shock so significant when something goes wrong. And in aviation, things go wrong in ways that are entirely outside your control.

This guide is for every aviation professional - whether you’re happily employed, actively job searching, or somewhere in between. Because the time to prepare for a career disruption is before it happens.

An up-to-date, visible CV is the best way to guard against unexpected career shocks. Start here: aviationjobsearch.com/register



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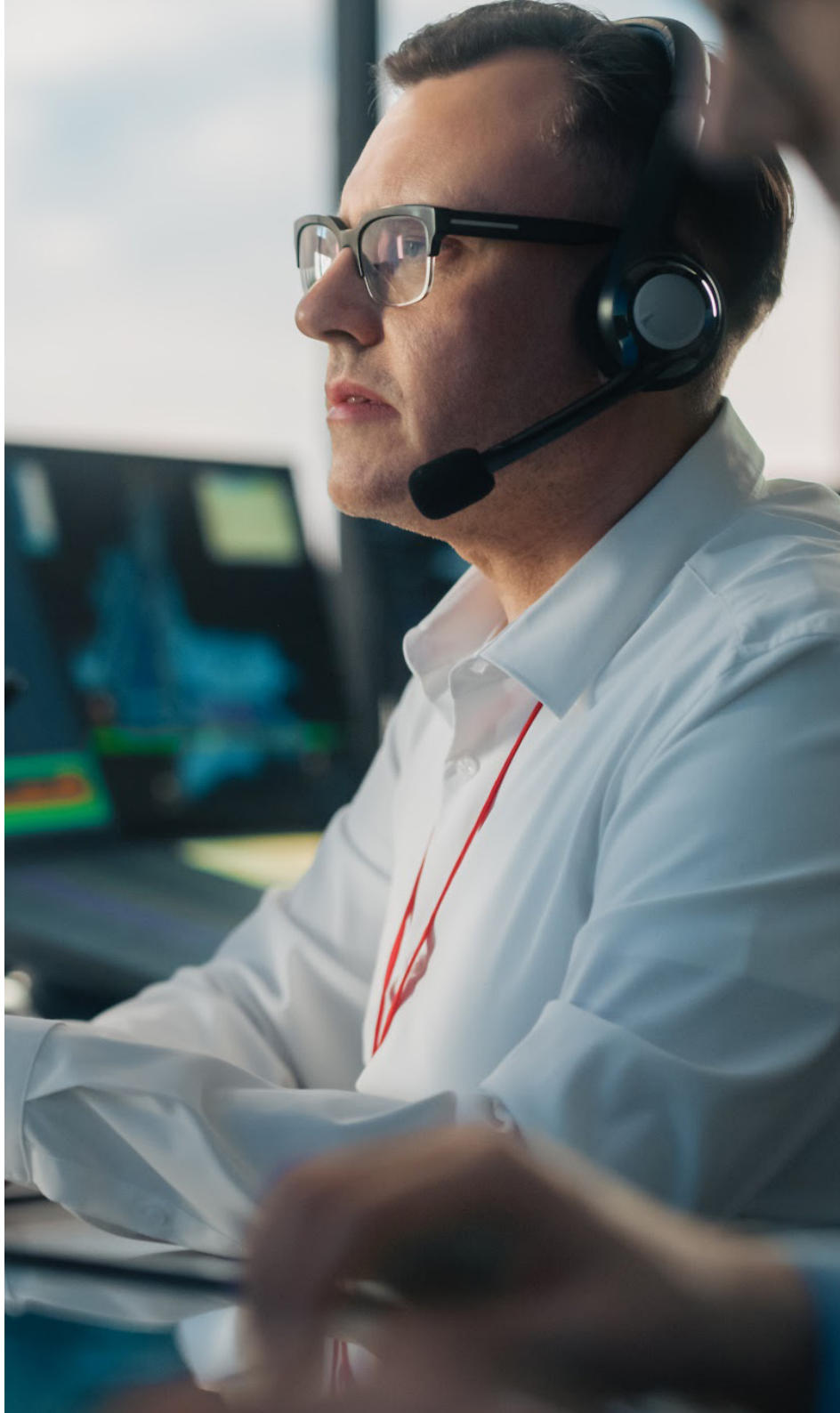
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Upload your CV and be prepared for anything your career can throw at you: aviationjobsearch.com/register



The Reality of Life in Aviation

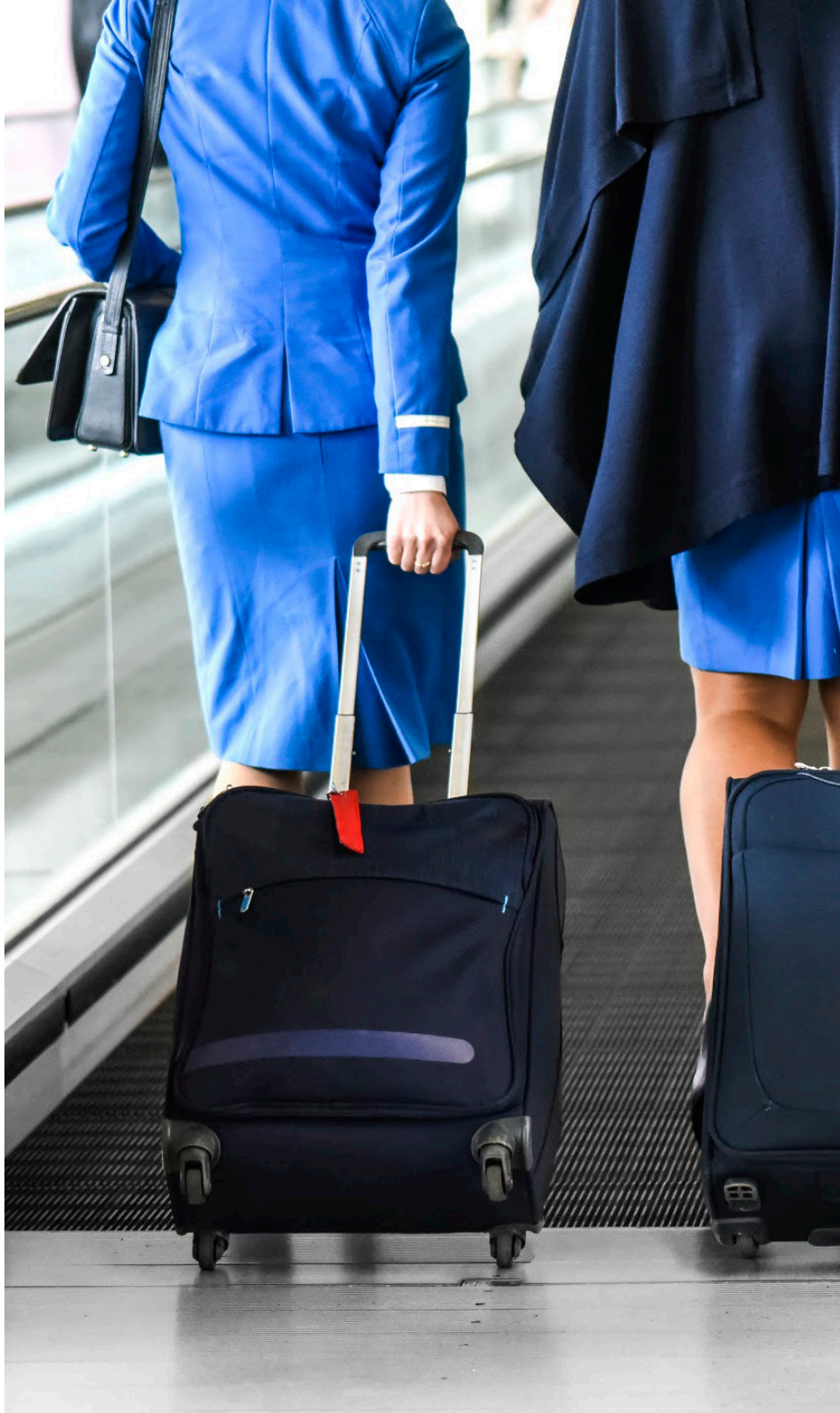
For many, aviation offers the perfect combination of purpose, challenge and opportunity. Whether it's travelling the world, developing specialist expertise or working at the forefront of technology, the rewards can be significant.

However the same forces can make it unusually vulnerable and precarious.

When you join the aviation industry, the focus is on what you're gaining: the career, the lifestyle, the progression.

What's rarely discussed is how quickly all of that can change, whether it's on a macro-scale, such as losing your medical certificate, to something more global which affects the whole sector.

Also rarely discussed are the basic steps you can take to best guard yourself against what your professional life can throw at you.



The most common causes of sudden career disruption in aviation include:

Airline or operator collapse

This is maybe one of the most-pressing issues in the industry at the moment and can be caused by any number of the other causes we'll talk about later.

In 2025, five airlines collapsed in Europe alone, including Play, Braathens International and Eastern Airlines. 2026 looks to be an equally difficult year across the industry costing the jobs of tens of thousands of aviation professionals after the collapse of Spirit and several European operators as well.

When a carrier fails, thousands of crew, engineers, and operations staff can find themselves out of work within days, often with little or no notice.

Contract and role elimination

Aviation can be fickle, and it most certainly can be cyclical. While there's always a known risk that charter contracts dry up and maintenance contracts get renegotiated, it's also true roles that seemed permanent can disappear in a restructure through redundancy, whether caused by any of the external factors we talk about in this guide, or by internal pressures.



Spirit finally collapsed in early 2026 after years of turmoil and failed rescue plans

Geopolitical events

Wars, sanctions, and regional instability can close routes and ground entire fleets with the effects of this trickling down to airlines not even directly impacted. Carriers operating in affected regions can lose revenue overnight.

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Pandemics and global crises

COVID-19 resulted in approximately 2.3m aviation job losses globally. While the industry bounced back with domestic travel equalling pre-covid levels by 2023, initially many professionals who had never considered the possibility of redundancy found themselves unemployed within weeks.

Oil price shocks

Fuel costs are a significant proportion of airline operating costs. A sustained spike in oil prices caused by global crises as we've discussed can trigger rapid restructuring, capacity cuts, and redundancies at airlines and across the industry.

Regulatory changes

Changes to operating requirements, safety rules, or licensing frameworks can affect entire categories of aviation worker - particularly those in specialist or niche roles.

Medical certificate loss

This is many pilots' greatest fears. A single health event - cardiac, neurological, vision, mental health - can render a pilot or ATCO unable to work, sometimes permanently. This can happen to anyone, at any stage of a career. While it's hard to out-plan this situation, basic steps can be valuable should your career need to pivot.







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The common thread across all of these is that they are largely, or entirely, outside your control. You can be an excellent and competent professional, fully current, well-regarded by your employer - and still find yourself without a role tomorrow.

Why Aviation Professionals Are Particularly Exposed



In most industries, professionals can pivot relatively easily. They update their CV, reach out to contacts, and start applying. Aviation is different. Licences, ratings, and currency requirements mean that your professional identity is bound up in documents that need to be kept current. Your employability is tied not just to your experience, but to the specific certifications you hold at the time you need a new role.

This creates a particular kind of vulnerability. You can spend a decade building genuine expertise - thousands of flying hours, multiple type ratings, a spotless record - and still find that none of it travels automatically to your next role. A type rating on one aircraft doesn't qualify you on another, and currency on a fleet can lapse within months of stepping away from it. Engineers face a version of the same problem: type-specific approvals and stamps don't transfer between fleets either, and many are already working contract-to-contract, which means the gap between one job ending and the next beginning is rarely cushioned by notice or security. None of this reflects on your skill; it's simply how the system is built.

Two people with equally strong career histories can have very different options, depending on which licence and currency they happen to hold the moment a role disappears. Finding the right match isn't only about being good at your job; it's whether your certifications line up with what an employer needs right now.

The encouraging part: because the system is document-driven, staying ahead of expiry dates and understanding which qualifications are most portable can shorten the road back. When a disruption comes, the clock starts immediately - and for those on temporary or agency contracts, whether flying or engineering, it can start without warning. The sooner you can present yourself professionally - paperwork ready, not just experience - the better your options.

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What ‘being prepared’ really looks like

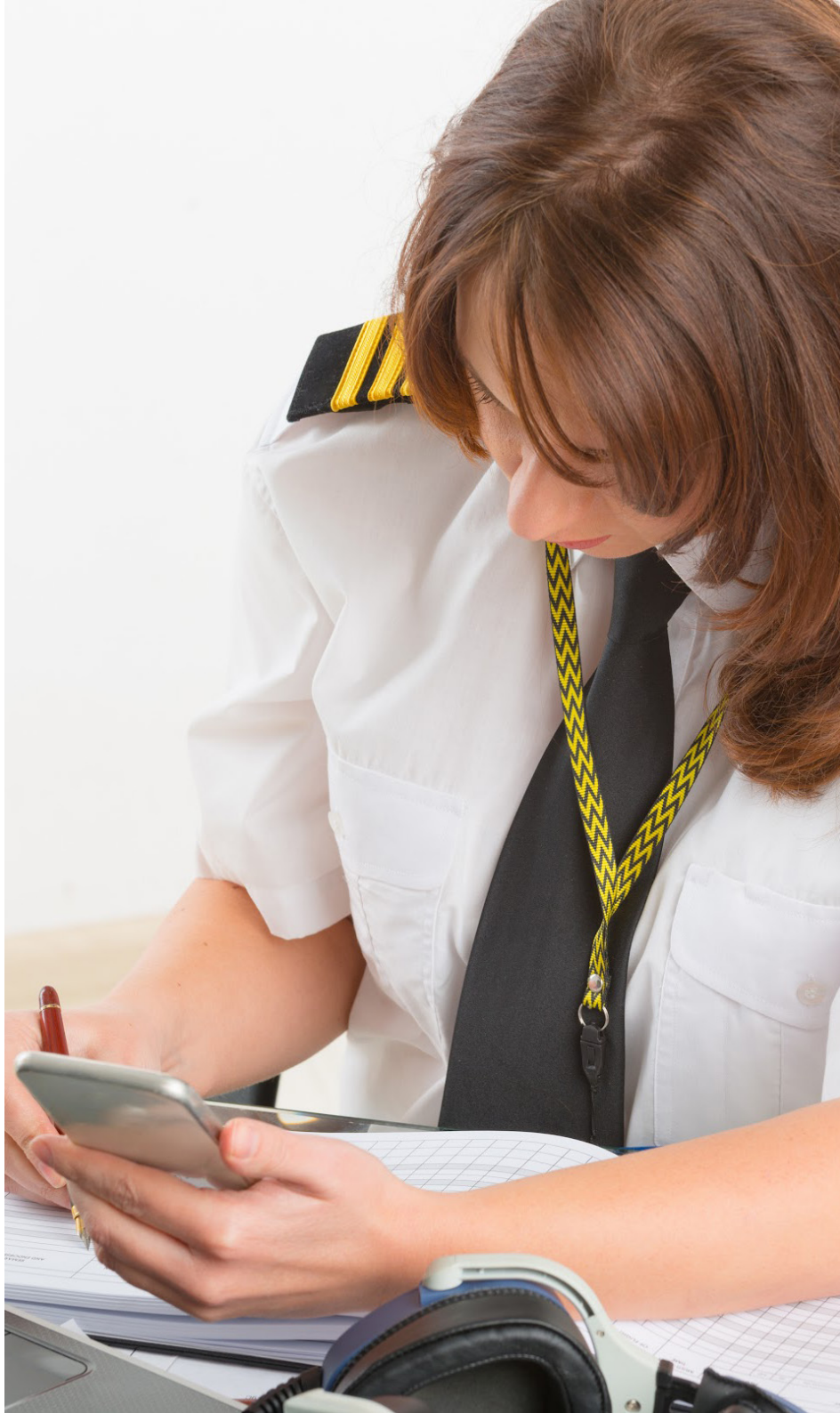
Preparation is not the same as paranoia. Keeping your professional presence in order is simply sensible - the aviation equivalent of carrying out a pre-flight check before you need to fly.

It doesn’t take long. And once it’s done, it takes very little to maintain.

Three Things That Matter Most

1. A current, accurate CV or resume

Your CV is the first thing any recruiter or employer will look at. In the immediate aftermath of a career disruption - when you may be stressed, rushed, or overwhelmed - is not the moment you want to be writing it from scratch, plus having an up-to-date CV gives you first-mover advantage.



A CV that is already up to date means you can move quickly. It means you're presenting yourself professionally from day one, rather than scrambling to remember your employment history, qualifications, and the dates of your type ratings.

A strong aviation CV should include:

- Your full licence and rating details, including issue dates and expiry where applicable
- Aircraft types, with total hours broken down clearly
- A complete, accurate employment history with dates
- Any additional qualifications - safety training, management experience, instructional roles
- A clear, professional summary at the top that states who you are and what you offer

2. An Active, Visible Candidate Profile

A CV in a folder on your desktop helps no one. Uploading it to a platform like Aviation Job Search means that when recruiters are looking for someone with your exact background - whether you're actively looking or not - they can find you. And with your completed CV, creating a profile takes just a minute or two as the process is largely automated.



Passive recruitment is a significant part of how aviation hiring works. Many professionals move into new roles not because they were actively searching, but because a recruiter found them and reached out. And when this happens, a placement is far more likely as the recruiter has already established that you are a good match.

Keeping your profile visible means you remain part of that conversation, even when you're not thinking about a job move - and let's be honest, being headhunted is pretty good for your self-confidence too.

Uploading your CV to create a candidate profile is the best way to get headhunted. Start here: aviationjobsearch.com/register

3. A Network You've Actually Maintained

In a crisis, the people who move fastest are usually those with relationships already in place. Colleagues who know your work. Recruiters who are familiar with your profile. Contacts who can provide a quick reference or make an introduction.

Networks go cold quickly if they're only maintained in an emergency. Staying connected - even at a low level - means that if you do need to reach out, the groundwork is already laid.

What this approach looks like in the real world

A recruiter looking to fill a First Officer role on a short-term notice period has limited time. They do not want to screen hundreds of irrelevant applicants so will search candidate databases first - and contact those whose profiles are active and current.

If your profile is outdated, incomplete, or missing, you simply won't come up.

The role will go to someone who took a few minutes to keep their profile in order.



Who this applies to

Career preparedness is not just for people who are unhappy in their current role, or who think redundancy is likely. The whole point is that disruption is rarely predictable.

If you are...	What this means for you...
Happily employed and not thinking about a move	This is exactly the right time to get your profile in order. You're not under pressure, so you can do it properly. If something changes, you'll be ready.
In a contract or freelance role	Contract work ends. Keeping your profile active and visible means the pipeline of opportunities stays open, reducing gaps between engagements.
Early in your aviation career	Early in your aviation career Building good habits early is far easier than correcting bad ones later. Get into the practice of updating your profile each time something changes you have something new to highlight
A pilot approaching medical renewal	Medicals are not always routine. Having your professional profile in order before a review is a sensible precaution, not a pessimistic one.
Working for a smaller carrier or operator	Smaller operators can be more exposed to commercial pressure. Keeping your options visible costs nothing and changes nothing about your current role.
Recently redundant or between roles	Speed matters. Having a complete, current profile means you can be found by recruiters immediately, rather than losing days getting your paperwork in order.

What recruitment looks like in 2026



When we started Aviation Job Search over 25 years ago, it was simple; a company would advertise a vacancy, then candidates would send their CV to apply.

Nowadays, increasingly, it's the opposite way around and recruiters will start by searching CVs and then contact suitable candidates.

On top of this, platforms like ours use smart matching so that when a candidate has criteria (such as job title, location, type rating, hours) that match the requirements that a recruiter might have, they will be surfaced so that they can be directly prioritised and contacted.

Often this means recruiters don't even advertise jobs as they have a sufficiently large pool of qualified candidates to choose from already.

The good thing for aviation professionals like you is that it creates more of a two-way street and a more transactional approach to job seeking. It also means jobs often come to you, rather than you having to search manually.

Even when you're not actively looking, there's a bigger chance that you will get headhunted which also makes the next steps easier as you are more comfortable in the knowledge that you're already ticking the recruiter's boxes.

But one thing that hasn't changed is how your CV is still central to the job search and shows the importance of staying on top of your CV and recruiter profile, neither of which are a huge commitment of time once you put the initial effort in.



Upload your CV: www.aviationjobsearch.com/register

Building Your Candidate Profile

Aviation Job Search is the UK's leading aviation job board, connecting aviation professionals with employers and recruiters across all sectors of the industry - commercial aviation, business aviation, MRO, ground handling, air traffic control, and more.

Creating or updating your profile takes just a few minutes. Here's how to approach it.

Step 1: Create or Update Your CV

Your CV is the foundation. If you haven't updated your one for six-or-more months, then this is the first thing to address.

When preparing your CV:

- Use a clean, professional format - straightforward and easy to read, both by humans and software
- List your licences and ratings prominently, near the top



Common mistakes, and how to avoid them

Avoid...	What to do instead...
Using a CV you wrote years ago and haven't touched since	Set a reminder to review your CV every six months, even if nothing has changed. Small updates are much easier than rebuilding from memory.
Listing aircraft types without hours	Always include total hours and, where relevant, hours by aircraft type. Recruiters need specifics.
An incomplete employment history	Even short contracts or gap periods should be accounted for. Unexplained gaps create questions that slow down your application.
A profile photo that's unprofessional or out of date	Use a clear, professional headshot. It doesn't need to be formal, but it should be recent and appropriate.
No contact information or outdated contact details	Check that the email and phone number on your profile are current. It sounds obvious, but this is a surprisingly common issue.
Describing yourself in vague terms	Be specific. 'Experienced pilot' tells a recruiter very little. 'Boeing 737 Captain with 4,200 hours and current EASA ATPL' tells them exactly what they need to know.
Only registering when you urgently need a job	The best time to register is when you don't need to. Profiles build history and visibility over time.

Upload your CV: www.aviationjobsearch.com/register

Your 30 minute career resilience checklist

Your CV or resume

- ☐ CV is no more than 2 pages (or 3 for experienced, senior professionals)
- ☐ Licences and ratings listed near the top, with issuing authority and validity
- ☐ Aircraft types listed with hours
- ☐ Employment history is complete and includes accurate dates
- ☐ Contact details are current
- ☐ A professional summary at the top gives a clear overview of your background
- ☐ No spelling errors or formatting issues
- ☐ Saved as a PDF (to preserve formatting)

Your Aviation Job Search profile

- ☐ Profile created and CV uploaded to Aviation Job Search
- ☐ Licence type and issuing authority listed
- ☐ Aircraft types and status entered
- ☐ Location and willingness to relocate or work away indicated
- ☐ Availability preference set (actively looking / open to offers / not available)
- ☐ Contact details correct
- ☐ Profile photo is professional and recent
- ☐ Notification preferences set so you receive relevant alerts

Your professional network

- ☐ LinkedIn profile is current and consistent with your CV
- ☐ At least two or three contacts you could approach for a reference at short notice
- ☐ Aware of two or three recruiters who specialise in your area of aviation
- ☐ Engaged with at least one professional community or association relevant to your role
- ☐ Notification preferences set so you receive relevant alerts

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Other practical steps to take

As well as keeping on top of your personal brand by maintaining your CV and online candidate profiles, here are some other practical steps you should consider.

Record commendations and feedback

Make sure you keep a ‘brag file’ of performance reviews, safety reports and personal commendations for reference and use in job interviews. These can be easily forgotten about, but it’s always something that is asked about during interviews.

Maintain situational awareness

Don’t be blind-sided. Keep an eye on your employer’s financial health and keep in mind warning signs that might prompt you to start actively job searching before the worst happens.

Build transferable skills

Diversifying can give you more options when you’re up against it. Even if it’s a short-term pivot while you look for something more permanent, upskilling yourself gives you more options. We have courses on our website, plus your employer may well give you access to a training fund.

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If you feel your job is at risk

If you sense that your job is in jeopardy - for example, you are hearing rumours, seeing profit warnings, enduring restructuring or have seen others close to you lose their job - then these are some steps you can take.

Immediate

- Retrieve and back up all personal records including licences, medical certificates, logbooks, and training records in case you lose access
- Re-read and familiarise yourself with your contract so you understand redundancy/notice pay
- Speak to your union or association rep for guidance and collective support

Job search

- Update CV with most recent hours/experience and start circulating quietly
- Contact your network directly rather than waiting for job ads
- Register with relevant recruiters/agencies straight away. We have a list of agencies in our Company Directory on our website, but here are some of the most active that we work with - please let them know we sent you:
  - Aeropeople
  - Aeroprofessional
  - Altitude Engineering
  - Baseline Aviation Services
  - Bostonair Group
  - Hub Selection Ltd
  - JMC Aviation
  - Lupos Global
  - Resource Group
  - Virtual Human Resources
  - WFS PRO
  - ZENON

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Financial

- Check eligibility for unemployment/redundancy benefits you might be entitled to
- Pause non-essential spending
- Check if any training/type ratings are at risk of lapsing without employer support, and budget for renewals if needed

Wellbeing

- Tell trusted people (family, friends, peer support) what's happening - don't isolate
- Use peer support programmes (many unions/ airlines have them) if available
- Keep a routine - job loss stress is well documented in aviation, and structure helps





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