

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3285
ANSWERED ON 28.03.2025

WORKING CONDITIONS AND GRIEVANCES OF LOCO PILOTS

3285. SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) the total number of sanctioned and vacant loco pilot positions in Indian Railways, zone-wise;
- (b) whether Government has conducted any study on the impact of excessive duty hours on health of loco pilots and railway safety, and if so, the findings thereof;
- (c) whether Government plans to implement the recommended cap on duty hours and night shifts, and if so, the timeline for the same; and
- (d) the steps taken to address delays in recruitment, revisions in running allowances, and concerns over pension schemes?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF RAILWAYS, INFORMATION & BROADCASTING AND
ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

(SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW)

(a) to (d): Occurrence and filling up of vacancies is a continuous processes on Indian Railways considering its size, spatial distribution and criticality of operation. Adequate and suitable manpower is provided to cater to the regular operations, changes in technology, mechanisations and innovative practices. The vacancies are filled up primarily by placement of indents by Railways with Recruitment agencies as per operational and technological requirements.

After easing of restrictions imposed on account of COVID 19, two major examinations involving more than 2.37 crore candidates have been conducted successfully.

Exam	Candidates	Cities	Centres	Days	Shifts
L2 - L6	1.26 cr	211	726	68	133
L1	1.1 cr	191	551	33	99

Based on these exams, 1,30,581 candidates have been recruited in Railways.

Recruitment done in Indian Railways during 2004-2005 to 2013-2014 vis-à-vis during 2014-2015 to 2023-2024 is given as under:-

Period	Recruitments
2004-2005 to 2013-2014	4.11 lakhs
2014-2015 to 2023-2024	5.02 lakhs

During the last ten years (i.e. from 2014-2015 to 2023-2024) and current year i.e. 2024-2025 (as on 01.01.2025), 64,007 candidates have been recruited for the post of Assistant Loco Pilot (ALPs).

Further, as a system improvement, the Ministry of Railways has introduced a system of publishing annual calendar from 2024 for recruitment to various categories of Group 'C' posts. The introduction of annual calendar will benefit the aspirants in the following manner:

- More opportunities for candidates;
- Opportunities to those becoming eligible every year;
- Certainty of exams;
- Faster Recruitment process, Training and Appointments

Accordingly, ten Centralized Employment Notifications (CENs) for 92,116 vacancies have been notified during January to December 2024 for filling up of posts of Assistant Loco Pilots (18,799 vacancies), Technicians, Sub-Inspectors, Constables in Railway Protection Force (RPF), Junior Engineers (JEs)/ Depot Material Superintendent (DMS)/ Chemical & Metallurgical Assistant (CMA), Paramedical Categories, Non-Technical Popular Categories (Graduate), Non-Technical Popular Categories (Under-Graduate), Ministerial & Isolated Categories and Level-1 posts.

First stage Computer Based Tests for 45,708 posts has been completed in two phases from 25.11.2024 to 30.12.2024 and 02.03.2025 to 18.03.2025. Details are as under: -

Exam	Candidates	Cities	Centres	Days	Shifts
1st Stage CBT for the post of ALP (18,799 vacancies)	18,40,347	156	346	5	15
CBT for the post of RPF-SI (452 vacancies)	15,35,635	143	306	5	15
1st Stage CBT for the post of JE/DMS/CMA (7,951 vacancies)	11,01,266	146	323	3	9
CBT for the post of Technician (14,298 vacancies)	26,99,892	139	312	9	27
CBT for the post of RPF-Constable (4208 vacancies)	45,30,288	149	354	12	36

Loco Pilots are important members of Indian Railway family who play pivotal role for moving passenger and goods traffic in safe and efficient manner. Indian Railways is committed to ensure proper working conditions for Loco Pilots. Loco Pilots are classified under Continuous Category. Section 132(2) of Railway Act, 1989, prescribes duty hours of 54 hrs a week on an average in a two-weekly period of fourteen days for staff working under Continuous Category. Rule 8 of “Hours of Work and Period of Rest” (HOER), 2005 lays down the guidelines of duty hours of 52 hrs a week on an average in a two-weekly period of fourteen days for Loco Pilots i.e., duty hours are less than maximum hrs of 54 per week for other “Continuous” category employees on Indian Railways. Loco Pilots are also compensated for extra working hours as per the rates specified in Section 132 of the Railway Act, 1989.

Based on the recommendations of High-Power Committee, duty hours of Loco Pilots were reduced in 2016. As per these recommendations, Sign On to Sign Off duty of 10 Hrs was reduced to 09 Hrs and also 10+2 Hrs of duties was reduced to 9+2 Hrs.

For improvement of working conditions of loco running crew, following measures have been taken in respect of the Running rooms:

- All 558 running rooms have been air-conditioned.

- Running staff are also provided with Yoga and meditation room, reading room with newspaper and magazines for relaxing in accordance with their requirements.
- Loco pilots have to keep a continuous watch on track and signals involving long hours of standing in loco while driving unlike aeroplanes and road vehicles. Therefore, foot massagers etc. are made available in running rooms for giving proper rest to loco pilots.
- Provision for subsidized meals in running rooms.
- Availability of RO water filters in running rooms.

Loco Pilots are paid various types of Running Allowances like Kilometrage Allowance (KMA), Allowance in Lieu of Kilometrage (ALK) and special compensatory allowances namely Accident Allowance, Breach of Rest Allowance, Ghat Section Allowance, Officiating Allowance, Outstation (Detention) Allowance, Outstation (Relieving) Allowance, Waiting Duty Allowance, Allowance in lieu of running room facilities, Shunting Duty Allowance, Trip Allowance etc. These allowances are also revised periodically.

Indian Railways follows the policies of 'Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare (DoP&PW), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions (MoPPGP), which is the nodal Ministry of Government of India on pension matters.
