

Specialist's Report: Licensing and medical

Our secretary kindly tasked me with writing a specialist report on airspace, licensing and medical. Not being an airspace specialist, but being deeply involved in the work for harmonising the aviation law in Europe, I will report on the future European glider pilot licence which EGU is negotiating with the European Agency for Safety in Aviation (EASA)

The future European Glider pilot licence

On 12th December 2007, the European Parliament finally extended EASA's competence to Licensing and Operations. The Essential Requirements which were adopted create a recreational pilot licence, named the *Light Aircraft Pilot Licence* (LAPL). This licence will permit flying all across Europe, with no built-in airspace restrictions, but will be less heavily regulated than the conventional JAR FCL Licence. In particular, a National Aero Club or a federation will be entitled to issue them and the medical fitness of the pilot will be assessed according to different standard and procedures than for the conventional JAR PPL. This LAPL will have different category ratings:

- LAPL (A) for aircraft
- LAPL (S) for sailplanes and powered sailplanes
- LAPL (B) for balloons and airships
- LAPL (H) for helicopters

There will be a common theory syllabus for all these licences and a cross-crediting of hours or experience for the holders of one rating when applying for another one. Furthermore, there will be a modular approach with a bridge to the conventional (ICAO-compliant) PPL which will still exist..

(For gliding, this conventional PPL will be called PPL(S) and it will have the same practical and theory syllabus as the LAPL. It will differ in the medical, which will be the ICAO class II medical. This will facilitate the conversion of the LAPL(S) into a PPL(S) for the few pilots wanting to fly sailplanes outside Europe.)

The implementing rules for this LAPL have been drafted by a working group in which I represented the gliding movement. They are essentially based on the ICAO requirements for the Glider pilot licence.

Experience:

Applicants for a LAPL(S) shall have completed at least 6 hours of flight time in sailplanes, powered sailplanes and/or TMG.

Training

Applicants for a LAPL(S) shall have completed on sailplanes, powered sailplanes or TMG at least 4 hours dual instruction, 2 hours of supervised solo flight time and 20 launches and landings.

Launch Methods:

The holder of a LAPL(S) shall only use a launch method other than that included during the skill test once s/he has completed:

- in the case of winch launch, a minimum of 10 launches dual instruction, and 5 solo launches under supervision;
- for aero tow, self launch, and car launches, a minimum of 5 launches dual instruction, and 5 solo launches under supervision.
- In the case of self launch, the dual training may be flown in a touring motor glider.

The completion of the additional training flights shall be entered in the logbook and confirmed by the instructor.

In order to maintain their privileges in each launch method, pilots shall complete a minimum of 5 launches during the last 24 months. When the pilot does not comply with the requirement above, in order to renew the privileges, the pilot shall complete the missing number of launches with an instructor.

Carrying passengers

If a passenger is to be carried, the licence holder shall have completed not less than 10 hours of flight time as pilot in command of sailplanes, powered sailplanes or TMG.

TMG

Holders of a LAPL(S) shall only exercise the privileges of their licence on a TMG when they have completed at least 6 hours of flight training on TMG, including:

- 1 training approach on an aerodrome operating a controlled air traffic environment;
- 20 supervised solo take-offs and landings;
- one solo cross-country flight of at least 150 KM, during which one full stop landing, at an aerodrome different from the aerodrome of departure, shall be performed.

The completion of the flight training above shall be entered in the logbook and confirmed by the instructor.

Validity of the licence

A LAPL(S) is valid for life.

To exercise the privileges of his/her licence the pilot has to:

- (1) hold a valid medical certificate/assessment and
- (2) have 6 hours flight time including 10 launches as pilot in command within the last 24 months or
- (3) have at least 3 hours flight time including 5 launches as pilot in command and a minimum of 3 training flights with an instructor within the last 24 months or
- (4) in the absence of meeting the requirements (2) or (3) above, undertake a check with an instructor.

At least once in every 6 years, a check with an examiner shall be performed

Medical fitness assessment

The assessment can be made either by an Aero Medical Examiner or by a General Medical Practitioner. The doctor will have to fill in a medical report form which details the standards. These standards are not higher than the standards of the ICAO Class 2 medical.

The form consists of yes/no responses, data can be easily managed on a computer data base.

The examination does not need aviation medicine speciality. The doctor has to be familiar with the applicant's medical records or proceed to verification. The form is to be countersigned by the pilot.

The periodicity is lighter than in the ICAO Class 2 medical: There will be only an initial examination if age below 45, an examination every 5 years between 45-65 and a yearly examination over 65.

Two working groups are currently completing the work by drafting the AMC (Acceptable Means of Compliance) on the theoretical and practical syllabi for the licences and the content of the skill tests. The EGU sub group licensing is preparing a proposal for gliding. Our objective is to keep these AMCs as light as possible, in order to allow our members to keep some degree of liberty in organising the training for the gliding licence.

The new implementing rules and acceptable means of compliance will be published soon for consultation under the form of Notice of Proposed Amendment (NPA). Everybody (even individuals) will be able to comment. EASA will then issue a Comment response Document and submit the draft of the new regulation to the European Commission of Transport. If all goes well, the new licensing system should become valid by the beginning of 2010.

Conclusion

We seem to be on the right track towards a European glider pilot licence with sensible requirements. Since ICAO has accepted the principle of a relaxation of the medical standards for the glider and balloons pilot licences, we should perhaps try to convince them to adopt the same standards as those which will be valid for the EASA LAPL. This would open the way to a simple glider pilot licence system valid worldwide. Maybe I am over-optimistic but it is not forbidden to dream ...

For more information on the harmonisation of aviation law in Europe see: www.egu-info.org

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