

New Glider Pilot licence on its way

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By now everyone will have heard about the European Aviation safety Agency (EASA). The next big impact on gliding will be the introduction of a new licensing system and its associated changes to the training syllabus.

Glider Pilot licences exist today, to apply for one you need a completed bronze C and a cross country endorsement. The problem is the licence is not internationally recognised, mainly because different nations have different ideas about the standards required.

One of the functions of EASA is to create common European Standards for licences, and this means all member nations will need to compromise to a greater or lesser degree.

EASA have full regulatory powers, unlike the JAA who had a more advisory role. This does mean that the status of both the CAA and therefore the BGA will change to some degree.

It must be remembered that the proposals are just that, *proposals*. But it has to be said that the overall framework is unlikely to change very much, and of course the devil is in the detail.

Outline of proposals

A full copy of the proposals can be found on the EASA website. They are listed as a Notice of Proposed Amendment (NPA), NPA17. NPA 17 is 650 pages long, so excellent bedtime reading for insomniacs.

By 2012, these proposals are planned to be fully implemented. There will be 2 levels of licence,

- Leisure Pilots Licence Sailplanes (LPL (S)). This licence will be recognised throughout Europe and is the equivalent to the current UK NPPL.
- Private Pilot Licence sailplanes PPL(S). This licence will be recognised worldwide and is equivalent to the current UK PPL.

It is generally accepted that “grandfather rights” will exist for pilots qualified under the existing arrangements. However new entrants will be expected to meet the new standards.

We are all accustomed to see training virtually stop after the first solo. Well under the new licence system the pilot will still be a student pilot, and only permitted to fly solo under the management of a supervising instructor. This will continue until he has completed the licence.

A formal training syllabus will now exist beyond solo, and solo will be just one step along a longer road.

The proposals also allow for a person to fly solo at 14.

The training syllabus

The theory syllabus and practical syllabus are very similar in content to today, so little change except the theoretical knowledge standards are now more complete and in my opinion at a higher standard. 4 of the theory subjects will now be identical to the PPL syllabus, and 5 will be specialist gliding subjects. This will mean we are able to use standard PPL training materials for much of the exam preparation.

(1) common subjects:

**Air law;
Human performance;
Meteorology;
Communications;**

(2) specific subjects for sailplanes:

**Principles of flight;
Operational procedures;
Flight performance and planning;
Aircraft general knowledge;
Navigation.....extract from NPA17**

The exam will consist of 120 multiple choice questions, with a pass mark of 75%.

Flight training will be subject to certain minima,

“(a) Applicants for a LPL(S) shall have completed at least 10 hours of flight time in sailplanes, powered sailplanes and/or TMG, including at least:

- (1) 8 hours dual instruction;**
- (2) 2 hours of supervised solo flight time;**
- (3) 40 launches and landings.”extract from NPA17**

You can see more detail on this at (www.timothyallen.co.uk/solo2silver) or go to the solo2silver link from the BGGC website.

Licensed pilots

Without a licence, you wont be permitted to fly cross country.

There will be new recency requirements

(a) *Sailplanes and powered sailplanes.* Holders of a LPL(S) shall only exercise the privileges of their licence on sailplanes or powered sailplanes when they have:

- (1) completed on sailplanes, in the last 24 months, at least:**
 - (i) 6 hours of flight time as pilot in command, including 10 launches; or**
 - (ii) 3 hours of flight time as pilot in command, including 5 launches, and a minimum of 3 training flights with an instructor;**
- (2) passed a proficiency check with an examiner on a sailplane at least once in every 6 years.....**
.....extract from NPA17

You should carry your licence with you and some means of identification.

Instructors

Instructors are key to delivering the training, and in this area we see some changes too.

The Basic Instructor (BI) rating will no longer exist. There is provision for a Light Aircraft Flight Instructor (Sailplanes) LAFI(S) and a Flight Instructor (Sailplanes) FI(S). These will be able to teach LPL(S) and PPL(S) respectively. The FI(S) will be able to teach both licences.

The new instructor courses will have a much larger emphasis on “teaching skills” than before. So more “how to teach” as well as the accustomed “what to teach”.

Summary

Grandfather rights will exist for existing pilots.

We need to recognise that gliding has changed from the old “chewing gum and string days”. Now we have sophisticated gliders, undertaking significant flights in airspace that is more complex and congested. Perhaps it is time for a review.

UK Gliding is accustomed to the paternal care given by instructors and clubs, under the new proposals pilots will need to become more responsible for their own actions. The modern pilot should be able to plan his flight in every detail, weather and NOTAMs included.

Much needed formalisation of training syllabii is provided, with the opportunity to use established PPL training material to support the pilot training programme.

It is interesting to see the proposed minimum age for solo is 14. The maturity of young people will vary enormously between individuals. This may provide a further burden on instructors who will need to become more aware of their pupils sense of responsibility as well as skill before letting them go solo.

I would be surprised if many instructors don't raise their eyebrows at the proposed recency requirements.