

UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) news Brexit and Pilot licensing: clarification

Forthcoming transfer of the aircraft and ground station radio licence service to the Communications Regulator

Brexit and Pilot licensing: clarification

With to Brexit and clarifying the position on pilot licensing, UK Civil Aviation Authority's (CAA) Head of Flight Operations, Rob Bishton, commented on 14 September: *'In a no-deal Brexit scenario, UK pilots operating UK-registered aircraft will not need to have their current licence reissued. Both commercial and private UK pilot licences would remain valid for use on UK-registered aircraft as the United Kingdom is a signatory to the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Chicago Convention. Our licences are internationally recognised – including by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) – both now and after 29 March 2019.'*

'The CAA will continue to issue and reissue pilots' licences when they are lost, damaged, when details need to be changed or pilots' privileges updated as we do now. Over time, this would include removing references to EASA – a purely cosmetic change. There will be no requirement for licences to be re-issued for any other reason meaning that there will be no change to this process.'

'The CAA would always strongly refute any suggestion that we are concerned about our ability to provide safety oversight to the UK aviation industry should no-deal be reached between the UK and the EU. The safety of passengers, crew and those on the ground will always remain our absolute priority and our focus is on our existing national safety oversight obligations.'

It is understood that the role currently played by EASA for new aircraft and component design could change in a no-deal scenario and the CAA is reviewing all options for how to manage this should that become necessary.

Bishton concluded by saying: *'As a responsible regulator, the CAA has been planning for all eventualities in the negotiations, including that of a no-deal, for some time. Our planning and contingency is advanced and we continue to work closely with the Government to prepare the industry for all scenarios.'*

Transfer of the aircraft and ground station radio licence service

Also on 14 September the CAA and Ofcom reported that they have begun contacting holders of aircraft and ground station radio licences with more information about the forthcoming transfer of the aircraft and ground station radio licence service to the Communications Regulator (Ofcom).

From 2 November 2018, aeronautical radio licences will no longer be issued by the CAA. Ofcom will instead take over the day-to-day administration of the service, issuing radio licences directly to aircraft owners and ground stations.

It will be recalled that the CAA has been issuing radio licences to the aviation sector for a number of years on behalf of Ofcom.

The two regulators have now e-mailed or written to all radio licence holders to explain the November switch in more detail. It is intended the change will enable Ofcom to achieve economies of scale as it will then handle all radio licences under one roof.

Licence holders do not need to take any action immediately. It is understood that the CAA will continue to administer licences until the end of October. Any applications not completed by the CAA by 31 October 2018 will be transferred to Ofcom to process.

It is important to note that the CAA will continue to issue frequency assignments and Air Navigation Order (ANO) safety approvals as normal.

The CAA Annual Report and Accounts for the year 2017 / 2018 is available here:

https://publicapps.caa.co.uk/docs/33/CAP1671_Annual%20Report_201718%28WEB%29.pdf