

Recreational Pilot Licence

In 2001, after industry consultation, the CAA and groups within the aviation community agreed to develop the Recreational Pilot Licence (RPL) concept as a 'licence' under Part 61.

There are two reasons for this. First, there is a need to ensure that international recognition of the New Zealand PPL is not compromised. Second, it is desirable for all pilot qualifications relating to the flying of an aircraft issued with an airworthiness certificate to be included within one rule Part.

The main driving force behind the RPL has been the aviation community's request to address the problem of private pilots who are no longer able to meet the medical standard, or cost associated with the Private Pilot Licence (PPL), but who want to continue flying standard category or special category certificated aircraft.

Currently, many pilots who fail to meet the Class 2 medical certificate standards, or find the specialist reports too costly, take up flying 'non-certificated' sport and recreational aircraft under the umbrella of the Part 149 certification system where the medical standards are less stringent. A number of sport and recreational aircraft, such as some microlights, have higher performance characteristics than many 'certificated' aircraft. By flying these types of aircraft, some pilots may pose a greater safety risk to the public and themselves than if they were to continue to fly the 'certificated' aircraft with which they are fully familiar.

The CAA published a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) on 28 August 2007 covering the RPL. Submissions closed on 21 September 2007.

Land Transport Medical Certificate

The proposed amendments to CAR Part 61 require a person wanting an RPL to hold a Land Transport New Zealand (LTNZ) Medical Certificate, valid for a Class 2, 3, 4, or 5 driver licence, with passenger endorsement. This will be issued by a General Practitioner (GP) in accordance with the Land Transport



This aircraft could be flown by someone with a Recreational Pilot Licence, but there will be operational limitations.

medical requirements. The cost of obtaining an LTNZ Medical Certificate will be about a quarter of the cost of the Class 2 aviation medical certificate.

The CAA will not be involved in decision making for the issuing of the medical certificate. The GP will issue it. If a pilot is not satisfied with a GP's decision to decline to issue the LTNZ Medical Certificate, they will have to utilise the appeal process under the LTNZ legislation, not the Civil Aviation Act.

RPL holders who are aged over 40 and hold an LTNZ Medical Certificate, will be required to renew their Medical Certificate every two years. RPL holders who are under the age of 40 will be required to renew their medical certificate every five years.

For more information on LTNZ Medical Certificates, see the LTNZ web site, www.ltsa.govt.nz.

RPL Licence Privileges and Limitations

The proposed operating conditions and limitations for the RPL are designed to minimise any additional risks that may arise from the lower medical standards, and mitigate the consequences if something goes wrong. The proposals are:

- limited to simple, non-high performance, single-engine aeroplanes;
- carriage of one passenger only;
- flight by day under Visual Flight Rules;
- no flight over congested areas, except during takeoff and landing;

- no eligibility for aerobatic flight rating, glider tow rating, parachute drop rating, agricultural rating, or instrument rating; and
- the aircraft is not operated for hire or reward, and the pilot does not act for remuneration.

After careful consideration, the CAA have proposed that the RPL be limited to a single-engine non-pressurised aeroplane with a designed maximum take-off weight of 2000 kg or less, for which the pilot holds an aircraft type rating.

Carriage of Passengers

It is proposed that the carriage of one passenger will be permitted, but that the onus will be placed on the pilot to formally advise the passenger that they hold an RPL and that they are therefore not required to meet the medical standards applicable to the PPL.

International Precedent

There is strong international precedent for an RPL. The USA, Canada, and the UK have all adopted such a licence in one form or another. Australia is considering proposals on the matter.

Submissions

Submissions are now being reviewed by the CAA's technical experts, before a summary of submissions and the CAA's responses will be published on the CAA web site. The Draft Final Rule is expected to be published on the CAA web site in mid October 2007 and we expect the RPL will become effective by February 2008. ■