

Agricultural Aircraft Operations

The effect of April 2016 changes to Part 1, Part 61 and Part 137

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Explanatory and guidance notes

Background

This document is intended to provide guidance to examiners, instructors and pilots about the rule changes that are now in force, particularly in respect of agricultural pilot licensing changes. It addresses frequently asked questions from industry. Some information in this document will be incorporated into Advisory Circulars in due course.

New rules affecting agricultural aircraft operations came into effect on 15 April 2016. The changes relate to Parts 1, 61 and 137. The Part 61 changes are significant especially in respect of Category E instructor privileges, the introduction of agricultural flight examiners and the introduction of separate aerial topdressing, aerial spraying and aerial VTA ratings. The pilot chemical rating validity has also been extended to 5 years, so when existing 3-year ratings expire the next renewal will be valid for 5 years.

CAA has introduced a standard that describes an acceptable means of compliance to Civil Aviation Rule (CAR) 61.707 currency requirements for certain aircraft types. This has been incorporated into AC61-15.

All competency assessments conducted under CAR 61.701(a)(11) and (b)(3), 61.703, 61.707, 61.711(a)(3), 61.721(a)(3) and 61.731(a)(3) are required to be completed under the provisions of a Part 141 or 137 certificate that authorises the holder to conduct the competency assessment.

All rules are available to view on the CAA website. You should familiarise yourself with these and if you have any queries or need help with interpretation please contact the Senior Technical Specialist – Agriculture, at the CAA.

Summary of changes

Part 1 Definitions and Abbreviations

There are now legal definitions described under Part 1 for aerial topdressing, aerial spraying and aerial VTA.

The definition of an agricultural aircraft operation has also changed to clearly define the meaning of this term. The 5 nautical mile wording has been removed from the definition and incorporated into a revised CAR 137.63.

Part 137 Agricultural Aircraft Operations

The Part 61 rule package included amendments to:

- 137.63 Operations over non-congested areas.
- 137.203 Remote Base Operations.
- 137.155 Safety management.
- 137.160 Agricultural aircraft operator safety management documentation.
- Appendix C Table C.1 and C.2.

Part 61 Pilot Licences and Ratings

Subpart G – Flight Instructor Ratings

61.303 Eligibility requirements – Category E flight instructor

Self-explanatory.

61.305 Privileges and limitations – Category E flight instructor

E Cats can no longer conduct competency assessments for the issue of Grade 1 or 2 agricultural pilot ratings. This privilege is restricted to agricultural flight examiners who hold that examiner privilege.

For an E Cat to give type conversion on agricultural aircraft and issue an agricultural aircraft type rating, the E Cat must have at least 50 hours on type as pilot-in-command in the same type of aircraft to be used for instruction. A copy of the type rating training and competency demonstration is forwarded to CAA by the instructor.

Form <http://www.caa.govt.nz/assets/legacy/Forms/24061-13.pdf> is used for aeroplane.

Form <http://www.caa.govt.nz/assets/legacy/Forms/24061-21.pdf> is used for helicopter.

The E Cat may conduct competency checks for and issue the new CAR 61.711 aerial topdressing, 61.721 aerial spraying and 61.731 aerial VTA ratings if they are rated and current in these specialisations. A copy of the flight test report is forwarded to CAA by the instructor.

Form <http://www.caa.govt.nz/assets/legacy/Forms/24137-04.pdf> is used for aeroplane.

Form <http://www.caa.govt.nz/assets/legacy/Forms/24137-05.pdf> is used for helicopter.

61.307 Currency requirements

The requirement in the old rules for 10 hours currency in the preceding 90 days has now gone. Instead, to be current to exercise E Cat privileges, the holder must hold a current Grade 1 agricultural rating, a current pilot chemical rating, have completed a biennial (24 month) E Cat renewal with an agricultural flight examiner (or ASPEQ), and be current in the type of operation the holder wants to exercise privileges in (topdressing, spraying, VTA).

61.309 Transitional Provisions for Category E flight instructors

This transitional provision no longer applies and will be removed in the next scheduled Rule Omnibus update.

The holder of a Category E Flight Instructor Rating will need to have successfully completed an E Cat renewal under CAR 61.307(e) within the immediately preceding 24 months to exercise the privileges of the rating.

Category E flight instructor continued competency demonstrations are conducted by agricultural flight examiners who hold that examiner privilege or ASPEQ (on request).

Subpart O – Agricultural Ratings

61.701 Eligibility

Rule 61.701(a) and 61.701(b) are for the initial Grade 2 and 1 agricultural rating issue. A current pilot chemical rating is an eligibility prerequisite that has to be met before undergoing training for these ratings. Only an appropriate and current agricultural flight examiner may conduct the competency assessments for issue. Upon successful completion, the flight examiner will endorse the applicant's pilot's log book. The candidate will submit a copy of the flight test report with their application for Agricultural Rating issue.

Form <http://www.caa.govt.nz/assets/legacy/Forms/24137-04.pdf> is used for aeroplane.

Form <http://www.caa.govt.nz/assets/legacy/Forms/24137-05.pdf> is used for helicopter.

In conjunction with the initial agricultural rating issue the flight examiner will also issue an aerial topdressing rating, aerial spraying rating or both, dependent upon what the applicant is being tested for. An applicant for a VTA rating will be required to hold a topdressing rating before a VTA rating can be issued.

NOTE: The flight test is only valid for 90 days from the date of the flight test (refer CAR 61.21). The applicant must apply to CAA for the issue of the rating.

Use an Application for Issue <http://www.caa.govt.nz/assets/legacy/Forms/24061-01.pdf> within the 90 day period. Outside the 90 day time frame the flight test will have to be redone.

61.703 Issue

Upon successfully demonstrating competency for the agricultural rating and specialisation ratings to an agricultural flight examiner, the flight examiner must enter the following statement in the pilot's logbook:

I certify that on [date of assessment] [name of pilot and licence number] demonstrated competency in agricultural aircraft operations in accordance with rule (61.701(a)(11)) (61.701(b)(3))* of the Civil Aviation Rules for the issue of a (Grade 2)* (Grade 1)* agricultural rating (aeroplane)* (helicopter)* with an (aerial topdressing rating)* (aerial spraying rating)* (aerial VTA rating)*. [date of entry, full name, signature and licence number of flight examiner].*

** delete as applicable*

Note: The wording in the Rule refers to 61.701(a)(8). This is an error which should read (a)(11) as above and will be corrected in the Omnibus update. It is important that the wording of the logbook endorsement is correct.

The pilot must apply to the Director under rule 61.11(a) to have the agricultural rating issued before exercising the privileges of the rating.

61.707 Currency requirements

An E Cat Instructor and an Agricultural Flight Examiner are both able to conduct annual agricultural competency demonstrations.

Holders of Grade 2 and 1 agricultural ratings must demonstrate competency annually in the category of aircraft (aeroplane and/or helicopter) being operated. The annual competency

check must include each of the specialist ratings intended to be exercised i.e. aerial topdressing, spraying and if applicable VTA. The applicant must demonstrate competency separately in both aerial topdressing and spraying, and if the applicant has had VTA experience and a VTA rating is required, then VTA competency may be demonstrated in conjunction with the aerial topdressing competency demonstration. However, the applicant will be required to successfully demonstrate the extra controls and requirements associated with VTA at the time of assessment. The full assessment needs to be documented.

The holder of an agricultural rating must not dispense an agricultural chemical from an aircraft on an agricultural operation unless they hold a current pilot chemical rating. Under Part 1 Definitions this includes solid and liquid fertiliser; therefore, if the applicant doesn't hold a current pilot chemical rating they cannot undergo an annual competency check.

Upon successfully demonstrating competency, the pilot log book must be endorsed with the following wording as described in Rule 61.707(a)(2) –

I certify that on [date of assessment] [name of pilot and licence number] demonstrated competency in agricultural aircraft operations in accordance with rule 61.707(a)(1) of the Civil Aviation Rules for continued currency of a (Grade 2) (Grade 1)* agricultural rating (aeroplane)* (helicopter)* performing (aerial topdressing)* (aerial spraying)* (aerial VTA)*. Next competency demonstration due on [enter date 12 months from date of assessment or 12 months from due date in accordance with paragraph (c) whichever is later]. [enter date of log book entry, and full name, signature and licence number of flight instructor or flight examiner].*

** delete as applicable*

If VTA competency is successfully demonstrated in conjunction with the topdressing competency demonstration the flight examiner or E Cat instructor who conducted the demonstration may issue the VTA rating by separately endorsing the pilot logbook with the endorsement wording described in rule 61.733.

When an E Cat or agricultural flight examiner issues any of the specialisation Topdressing, Spraying or VTA ratings that are not completed as part of the Grade 2 or 1 initial agricultural rating the logbook must be endorsed in accordance with the appropriate wording as described in rules 61.713, 61.723 and 61.733.

Note: It is important that the wording of the logbook endorsement is exact (as this is the wording embedded in the Rule).

The flight examiner or E Cat must forward the appropriate competency assessment form to CAA upon completion.

Form <http://www.caa.govt.nz/assets/legacy/Forms/24137-04.pdf> is used for aeroplane.

Form <http://www.caa.govt.nz/assets/legacy/Forms/24137-05.pdf> is used for helicopter.

61.709 Transitional provisions for agricultural ratings

The transitional provisions no longer apply and will be removed in the next scheduled Rule Omnibus update.

Licensing Administration

Although it is not mandatory for the specialisation ratings (topdressing, spraying and/or VTA), pilot chemical rating or aircraft type ratings to be endorsed onto the pilot licence, CAA recommends having the applicable ratings endorsed on the licence at the same time as the Agricultural Rating issue. This is because log book entries are commonly not recognised overseas. The cost for issuing the agricultural rating is \$131.00. The additional ratings will be

added at no extra charge if they are requested to be added at the same time as the Grade 2 or 1 initial agricultural rating issue

Ratings completed in conjunction with the Grade 2 or 1 issue flight test will only be added to the pilot licence if the application is supported by a CAA24061/01 form and appropriate evidence:

- For Grade 2 or 1 agricultural ratings and specialisation ratings issued at the same time, a photocopy of the pilot log book showing the CAR 61.703 endorsement recommending the issue of the agricultural rating and the issue of the specialisation ratings.
- For an aircraft type rating, a photocopy of the pilot log book showing the issue of the rating and CAA form 24061/13 (for aeroplane) or 24061/21 (for helicopter).
- For a pilot chemical rating, a photocopy of the current pilot log book endorsement showing the issue of the rating or completion of a refresher course, and the expiry date.

The applicant must also forward to CAA, their current pilot licence with the application before the agricultural rating can be issued, as a new licence will be issued. The current medical certificate is not required.

Any specialisation ratings added after the Agricultural Rating has been issued will be issued in accordance with the appropriate rule as described below. The pilot's log book endorsement certifying the issue must be in accordance with and as prescribed by each rule. This means for each specialised rating issued, the E Cat or agricultural flight examiner must make a separate endorsement in the applicant's pilot log book. It is not mandatory but is recommended by CAA to apply to have the rating or ratings endorsed on the pilot's licence.

Use amendment form CAA24061/04 <http://www.caa.govt.nz/assets/legacy/Forms/24061-04.pdf> for all add-on ratings.

Subpart OA – Aerial Topdressing Rating

61.711 Eligibility requirements

To be eligible for an aerial topdressing rating a pilot must hold at least a Grade 2 agricultural rating. All agricultural pilot training and competency demonstrations are required to be conducted under either a Part 137 or Part 141 certificate that authorises the privileges.

Category E flight instructors and agricultural flight examiners if rated, both hold the privilege to conduct competency demonstrations for aerial topdressing and issue this rating.

61.719 Transitional provisions for holders of agricultural ratings

The transitional provisions no longer apply and will be removed in the next scheduled Rule Omnibus update.

61.713 Issue

If the aerial topdressing rating is being issued in conjunction with the agricultural rating, the flight examiner must endorse the log book using the wording in rule 61.703(a)(2).

If the pilot already holds a current agricultural rating and the topdressing rating is only being added; the flight examiner or flight instructor must use the endorsement wording from rule 61.713(a)

I certify that on [date of assessment] [name of pilot and licence number] satisfied the requirements of Part 61 of the Civil Aviation Rules for the issue of an aerial topdressing rating for (aeroplanes) (helicopters)*. [enter the date, full name, signature, and licence number of the flight instructor or flight examiner issuing the rating].*

Exact wording required.

A copy of the flight test report is forwarded to CAA.

To issue an aerial topdressing rating the rules only require a pilot log book endorsement. Aerial topdressing is not required to be endorsed on the pilot licence, although the CAA recommends that this is done. CAA amendment form 24061/04 is used to apply for this.

61.717 Currency requirements

The holder must not exercise the privileges of a topdressing rating unless within the preceding 12 months he or she has successfully demonstrated competency under CAR 61.711(3).

Subpart OB – Aerial Spraying Rating

61.721 Eligibility requirements

To be eligible for an aerial spraying rating a pilot must hold at least a Grade 2 agricultural rating. All agricultural pilot training and competency demonstrations are required to be conducted under either a Part 137 or Part 141 certificate that authorises the privileges.

Category E flight instructors and agricultural flight examiners if rated, both hold the privilege to conduct competency demonstrations for aerial spraying and issue this rating.

61.729 Transitional provisions for holders of agricultural ratings

The transitional provisions no longer apply and will be removed in the next scheduled Rule Omnibus update.

61.723 Issue

If the aerial spraying rating is being issued in conjunction with the agricultural rating, the flight examiner must endorse the log book using the wording in rule 61.703(a)(2).

If the pilot holds a current agricultural rating, and the spraying rating is only being added; the flight examiner or flight instructor uses the endorsement wording from rule 61.723(a) –

I certify that on [date of assessment] [name of pilot and licence number] satisfied the requirements of Part 61 of the Civil Aviation Rules for the issue of an aerial spraying rating for (aeroplanes) (helicopters)*. [enter the date, full name, signature, and licence number of the flight instructor or flight examiner issuing the rating].*

Exact wording required.

A copy of the flight test report is forwarded to CAA.

To issue an aerial spraying rating the rules only require a pilot log book endorsement. Aerial spraying is not required to be endorsed on the pilot licence, although the CAA recommends that this is done. CAA form 24061/04 is used to apply for this.

61.727 Currency requirements

The holder must not exercise the privileges of a spraying rating unless within the preceding 12 months he or she has successfully demonstrated competency under CAR 61.721(3).

Subpart OC – Aerial VTA Rating

61.731 Eligibility requirements

To be eligible for an aerial VTA rating a pilot must hold at least a Grade 2 agricultural rating and an aerial topdressing rating. All agricultural pilot training and competency demonstrations are required to be conducted under either a Part 137 or Part 141 certificate that authorises the privileges.

Category E flight instructors and agricultural flight examiners if rated, both hold the privilege to conduct competency demonstrations for aerial VTA and issue the rating.

61.739 Transitional provisions for holders of agricultural ratings

The transitional provisions no longer apply and will be removed in the next scheduled Rule Omnibus update.

61.733 Issue

If the VTA rating is being issued separately or at the same time as the continued competency demonstration for aerial topdressing; the flight instructor or agricultural flight examiner may issue the aerial VTA rating after the pilot has successfully demonstrated competency by endorsing the pilot logbook with the wording in rule 61.733(a)

I certify that on [date of assessment] [name of pilot and licence number] satisfied the requirements of Part 61 of the Civil Aviation Rules for the issue of an aerial VTA rating for (aeroplanes) (helicopters)*. [enter the date, full name, signature, and licence number of the flight instructor or flight examiner issuing the rating].*

** delete as applicable*

Exact wording required.

A copy of the flight test report is forwarded to CAA.

To issue an aerial VTA rating the rules only require a pilot log book endorsement. Aerial VTA is not required to be endorsed on the pilot licence, although the CAA recommends that this is done. CAA form 24061/04 is used to apply for this.

61.737 Currency requirements

The holder must not exercise the privileges of a VTA rating unless within the preceding 12 months he or she has successfully demonstrated competency under CAR 61.731(3).

Subpart P – Pilot Chemical Ratings

61.757 Currency requirements

The holder of a pilot chemical rating must not exercise the privileges of the rating after 5 years from the date of issue unless within the previous 5 years the holder has successfully completed a refresher course acceptable to the Director and a record has been endorsed in the pilot's log book.

After the existing 3 year ratings have expired, all new ratings will be valid for 5 years from the date of issue.

Subpart S – Flight Examiner Ratings

61.901(c) Eligibility requirements

Flight examiner ratings are issued by CAA only – Refer to AC61-19.

61.905(ba) Privileges and limitations – Agricultural flight examiner rating

All assessments/flight tests must be conducted under a Part 141 or 137 certificate that authorises the holder to conduct the flight tests for which the examiner holds the appropriate privilege.