

Information for Microlight Pilots with Medical Issues

The UK CAA Pilot Medical Declaration (PMD)

This allows you to “self certify” your fitness to fly aircraft in UK airspace. Although details are given on the CAA website, they are a little confusing. This is an attempt to make things a little clearer

How to Make Your Declaration

There are two stages to this process:

Stage 1 – Being granted access to the CAA Portal

Before you can make your declaration you need to register to use the CAA “portal”. This is a secure electronic “gateway” that allows you access to a variety of services that the CAA provides. Your application will involve scanning in some I D document (eg Passport, Driving Licence) and entering a “username” and “password” and Mobile Phone number of your choice (you will need these later!). After being checked by the CAA , if all is well after several days you will get an e-mail to say that your portal access has been approved and if you don’t already have one, you will be issued with a “CAA Ref”(keep it safe). Now you can use the portal to make your declaration.

Stage 2 – Making your declaration

You will need to enter your username and password. The system will generate a security code that will be sent to the mobile phone number (that you selected for your application) – once you enter this you should see a menu giving a list of “services” that are available to you. Select “medical” and you will now be offered a selection of medical types on offer. Select “pilot medical declaration” and you now can make your declaration.

Amazingly, the UK CAA allow pilots to self- declare their fitness to fly heavy metal (over 2000kg MATOM) commercially in UK airspace. Quite reasonably they don’t let pilots make this declaration if they have any number of medical conditions listed as “disqualifying conditions”. However, to fly an aircraft under 2000kg there is only one “disqualifying condition” that does not allow you to self declare even though you are otherwise completely fit to drive a car, that is if you are taking medication for a psychiatric condition. This includes anti depressives – even if taking a small dose and they have done their job and you are no longer depressed! If this is the case you cannot use the UK CAA PMD system. You need to contact an AME and apply for a LAPL Medical. Your nearest AME can be found on

www.caa.co.uk/medical under ‘Search for an Aeromedical Examiner’.

Please take care to ensure you tick the box to indicate you are applying only to fly aircraft less than 2000kg MATOM.

You are being asked to declare your fitness according to DVLA Group 1 private car driving standards.

The CAA has decided to use DRIVING standards because they are tried and tested, GPs are trained to assess fitness to drive and the information is readily available on the DVLA Website. If you are in any

doubt you should ask your GP if you are fit to DRIVE (not fly). Deciding fitness to drive is part of their job but deciding fitness to fly is not!

Having filled in the form, you will not be issued with any “certificate” but you should print off a copy of your application, sign and date it. This can then be used as proof that you have made a PMD. Your declaration lasts until your 70th Birthday! After this you need to re- declare every 3 years (same as your driving licence).

You don't have to have a Driving Licence, you are just using the same DVLA criteria of fitness as you would if you were a car driver.

What happens if you become unfit?

Air Law says: “A person must not act as the member of the flight crew of an aircraft registered in the UK if they know or suspect their physical or mental condition renders them temporarily or permanently unfit to act in such capacity.” So if you no longer reasonably believe that you meet the medical requirements of a DVLA Group 1 Ordinary Driving Licence, or you have been advised by a medical practitioner, that you are unfit to drive, **you must not fly!**

If you are unfit for longer than three weeks **you MUST withdraw your medical** declaration by ticking the appropriate box on the CAA on line medical Declaration page.

This also applies if you start to take medication for a psychiatric condition – even if your GP says you are fit to drive. This is the only “**disqualifying condition**” that applies.

The DVLA gives a list of “**Notifiable Conditions**” – if you have any of these it is likely that you will be considered unfit for a specified time but often can be made “fit” again once certain conditions are met.

See: <https://www.gov.uk/driving-medical-conditions>

And: <https://www.gov.uk/health-conditions-and-driving/find-condition-a-to-z>

When you have recovered to the extent that you believe you meet the DVLA standards for the return to private driving (DVLA Group 1 Criteria) you should request advice from your GP or the DVLA.

If you are advised that you are fit to drive again, make sure this opinion is recorded in your GP medical notes. You must now make a new Pilot Medical Declaration on the CAA Website before you can resume flying.

The BMAA Medical Declaration Advisor Service

Dr Richard Leigh and Dr Paddy Yeoman are both CAA Approved Medical Declaration Advisors. If you need specific advice, we are happy to help. We offer this service free of charge to our fellow pilots in our spare time. Contact is via the BMAA by e-mail.

We require an e-mail enquiry, but please also supply your telephone number so we can discuss confidential issues.

Complicated cases may require referral to the DVLA itself for an opinion from their panel of experts, this may take some time. If you don't have a driving licence, the DVLA will not be interested so you will need to see an AME and be assessed for a LAPL medical certificate. The LAPL medical criteria are very similar to the DVLA driving standards but the AME has more flexibility. In some marginal cases a "limitation" can be applied (e.g. "No Passengers", "Must fly with a safety pilot" or "Review again in 6 months"). Most AMEs are pilots themselves and understand the safety risks relating to flying. The cost of a LAPL assessment is roughly the same as for a one hour flying lesson.

Remember; If you don't have a valid PMD or LAPL medical certificate, your licence is invalid and so is your insurance. Just being in possession of a driving licence does not mean you are fit to fly! Unfortunately there are many people driving on our roads who should have declared themselves unfit. The UK CAA PMD is a great privilege that was hard won – don't abuse it!

Paddy Yeoman