

## **What does the recent announcement about a move to 600 Kg microlights mean in practice?**

### **What has happened?**

The UK CAA has announced that they will take the option of opting-out of EASA regulation to create a new opportunity for manufacturers to build aircraft under national rules for a Permit to Fly that would otherwise have been under EASA regulation and required to hold a Certificate of Airworthiness.

The aircraft within this new range will have a maximum number of two seats; a maximum take-off mass of 600 kg; a stall speed not exceeding 45 knots.

Amateur built aircraft within this definition are already nationally regulated and certified to the Permit to Fly standard, although not currently called microlights. The significant change has been to include factory-built aircraft as UK regulated.

### **Are these aircraft microlights?**

Yes, at the introduction of the regulations the microlight definition will be changed to include new aircraft that fall within the new definition; it applies to both factory-built and amateur-built aircraft.

### **Can I have one of these aircraft now?**

Having made the decision the CAA is now starting work with industry representatives, including the BMAA, on what is referred to as the implementation stage. This is likely to take 6- or 7-months meaning aircraft could become available by early 2021, but not before the end of 2020. Actual implementation will not start whilst the UK is a member of EASA for simplicity of managing the change in regulation. We will be leaving at the end of 2020.

### **Airworthiness**

#### **Design codes**

To be issued a UK Permit to Fly each design must be approved to an acceptable design code. During the implementation stage the working group will develop options for design codes. Although we already certify aircraft up to, and over 600 Kg, there will be a need to address factors such as basic empty weight and payload within the design codes to ensure that the aircraft are useable; we need to avoid creating a group of heavy aircraft with no useful range.

The work of developing the design codes will be part of the working group's remit. The BMAA technical office staff, along with other microlight industry experts will be involved in this process.

### **Can I import an aircraft made outside the UK?**

We are aware that members have seen aircraft in other countries that they would like to own and fly in the UK. The current situation whereby all factory-built aircraft must go through the UK certification process, design approval and be built by a UK approved company, will be reviewed by the working group.

We will be looking at other countries with the aim to standardise airworthiness design codes and manufacturing approvals where possible to make import and export simpler. The aim is to allow our members a simpler system to allow them to fly aircraft from abroad, and for UK manufacturers to be able to sell outside the UK with fewer regulatory obstacles.

**Can existing aircraft within the BMAA fleet, which have higher MTOM in other countries, automatically fly at higher weights in the UK?**

No. To fly an existing aircraft at a higher MTOM the design will have to be re-certified by the BMAA following a submission by the manufacturer or kit supplier. An individual could apply for re-certification if there is no support from the manufacturer or kit supplier.

Some types, such as the Eurofox, are certified in the UK as both microlights and light aircraft. If the owner of a microlight certified by the BMAA wants to take advantage of the higher MTOM allowed for the light aircraft version the aircraft will have to be re-certified. Assuming the manufacturer can provide the BMAA with copies of the certification submission at the higher weight we will make it as simple as possible to re-certify the aircraft at the higher weight. It is not just an automatic process.

**My type is already approved at 472.5 Kg if fitted with a recovery system. Can I automatically fly up to 472.5 Kg now, or when the new regulations apply?**

No. Each aircraft that has been fitted with a recovery system has been modified and individually approved. Part of the approval addresses the effect of the system on the Centre of Gravity. Adding fuel weight instead of a recovery system moves the position of the extra weight and so may affect the C of G. The effect of this will need to be quantified. We believe that it should be fairly straightforward for a manufacturer to apply for a re-certification of the type on behalf of the owners. The BMAA will look to make such transitions as simple and inexpensive as possible and has already initiated a program for the development of a standard modification for amateur built aircraft which are part of the BMAA fleet.

**I have an existing aircraft that meets the new microlight definition, does it now become a microlight?**

No. Existing designs will stay within the class that they are in unless the manufacturer or kit supplier chooses to re-certify the design. If the design is recertified the existing aircraft have the opportunity to change to the microlight class by demonstrating that they meet the new design certification standards, but it will not be an automatic change.

**Is there any change to the regulations governing single seat aircraft?**

The new microlight definition includes aircraft with a single seat, so it will be possible to have a single seat microlight that weighs more than the current 300 Kg limit [without recovery system]. However, those aircraft will be regulated for airworthiness purposes so outside the current SSDR fleet.

The current SSDR definition will remain.

**Licensing**

**I have a NPPL with a microlight class rating. What will I have to do to be able to fly the heavier microlights?**

Changes to the definition of a microlight **MIGHT** mean that current licence holders will have to undertake further training to fly the heavier aircraft. Ultimately the decision rests with the CAA, but as experts in the field of microlight licensing we have the opportunity to influence the decision during the implementation phase debate.

The BMAA approach is to require the minimum, if any, additional training, although recognising that some pilots who have only flown simple, lighter microlights may need some training in aspects of performance and weight and balance calculations.

**I am a microlight instructor. Will I automatically be able to teach on heavier microlights?**

During the implementation stage the working group will be reviewing microlight instructor capability. The BMAA approach is to require the minimum, if any, additional training, although recognising that some instructors who have only flown simple, lighter microlights may need some training in aspects of performance and weight and balance calculations.

**I am a microlight examiner. Will I automatically be able to examine on heavier microlights?**

During the implementation stage the working group will be reviewing microlight examiner capability. The BMAA approach is to require the minimum, if any, additional training, although recognising that some examiners who have only flown simple, lighter microlights may need some training in aspects of performance and weight and balance calculations.