

High time

Advice on use of balloon pilot logbooks

AN EXPERT GROUP of balloonists and regulators has moved to clarify what information should be recorded in balloon pilot logbooks.

The balloon joint technical committee, made up of members of the Professional Ballooning Association of Australia and CASA specialists, recommends that balloonists take care to separately record commercial and private flight times.

Bob Winckel, a member of the technical committee, says balloonists who fail to separately record details of commercial flights may jeopardise future endorsements and approvals.

“Balloon class endorsements, which apply to commercial balloon licences, are dependent on experience in commercial operations, so you need to record whether the flights are commercial or private. Chief pilot approval also requires certain experience in commercial operations,” he says.

There are two classes of approval for ballooning – a commercial pilot (balloon) licence for commercial operations and a private pilot certificate (PPC) for private operations. CASA administers the commercial licence, and the Australian Ballooning Federation administers the private certificate.

The technical committee recommends balloonists:

- use CAO 40.1.0 (subsection 9 and 10) as a guide to recording details of flights in the logbook (CAOs are published on the CASA website at casa.gov.au/avreg/rules)

- use columns to separate commercial flights from private flights if only one logbook is kept; otherwise keep two logbooks

- create a column for tether time if a CASA-type logbook is used.

Winckel says the time balloonists should record in logbooks is the total time from the moment the balloon first becomes airborne until it comes to rest on the ground. Tether time should be recorded separately and does not count toward the experience requirements for chief pilot or balloon class endorsements.

“The old belief that you should log ‘burner on to burner off’ is wrong. Also, the time you spend on the ground during passenger exchanges during a ‘double hop’ is not flight time, and should not be logged,” Winckel says.

The CASA website casa.gov.au under “Pilots & flying” provides information on logging of flight time.



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B R I E F S

Photo licences

CASA issued the first of the new photographic licences in July.

First-time applicants for flight crew licences are now required to submit background information and photographic identification.

This is used to run background and security checks before CASA issues a licence.

Applicants must submit two recent passport-sized photos and documents that verify their identity.

They must also prove citizenship and provide evidence of recent residential addresses. The licence processing time has increased as a result of the background checks.

CASA urges student pilots and flying schools to ensure applications are in early.

More details are on the web at casa.gov.au/avreg/fcl/photo.

Streamlined airspace

Advances in technology and development of internationally-agreed standards are seeing initiatives to streamline airline operations worldwide. required navigation performance (RNP) standards aim to reduce the separation between aircraft while safely maximising the use of airspace, bringing substantial economic benefits to air operators.

Apart from ad-hoc approvals issued by CASA, no formal regulations exist for Australian RNP.

To improve CASA's delivery of services, new navigation approval legislation is proposed under subpart U of CASR part 91.

The details are on the CASA website in a notice of proposed rule making at rrp.casa.gov.au/91u.

The NPRM is open for public comment until September 22.

Stay informed

While CASA's regulatory reform program has been busy creating new Civil Aviation Safety Regulations, legislative changes continue to be made to existing Civil Aviation Regulations and orders.

And with half of the CASRs already made, several are now undergoing post-implementation review in parallel with amendments to the CARs and CAOs.

To stay informed about legislative changes, subscribe to CASA's email notification service via the web (rrp.casa.gov.au/alertme).

Get involved

After more than five years in office, the standards consultative committee continues to be the main industry body for consultation on regulatory change in Australia.

Members of industry associations and organisations can lobby their SCC representatives to take issues to SCC meetings, normally held four times a year.

While the SCC looks at the bigger picture, the detailed research and development of ideas for regulatory reform is assigned to nine specialist sub-committees.

Information on SCC reps, specialist subcommittees and meeting decisions is available on the web at rrp.casa.gov.au/scc.

Chopper whoppers

Gareth Davey busts some myths about requirements for flying helicopters



Rising role: Over the past 20 years, helicopter numbers have tripled.

DRIVING A CAR without a licence is at best a hazard, at worst outright dangerous. And, of course, it's illegal. So why would anyone think they can fly a helicopter without a licence? Industry sources are telling CASA that myths about light sport and utility helicopters are on the rise.

Whopper #1: You can buy an old helicopter and, as long as it's not registered, fly it without a licence and even teach yourself to fly.

It is illegal to fly an unregistered aircraft, unless the aircraft is not required to be registered – see section 20AA of the *Civil Aviation Act*. Breach of section 20AA carries a maximum penalty of 2 years imprisonment. Further, flying a helicopter in this situation is likely to be “reckless flying”, prohibited by section 20A of the Act. A breach of section 20A carries a maximum penalty of 5 years imprisonment.

Whopper #2: You can buy an ultralight helicopter and as long as you fly it privately, no licence is required, but a few lessons with an instructor might be advisable.

All pilots flying helicopters of any size must hold a helicopter pilot licence issued by CASA. While pilots of ultralight aeroplanes, hang gliders and simi-

lar sport aircraft may operate under exemptions specified in Civil Aviation Order part 95, there are no exemptions for ultralight helicopters. Pilots wanting to fly ultralight helicopters must:

- get a student pilot licence
 - take flight training with a qualified flight instructor at a CASA-authorized flying training school
 - gain a helicopter pilot licence with an appropriate helicopter type or class endorsement.
- Note that most ultralight helicopters can be flown by a licence holder under the small single-engine helicopters class endorsement in CAO 40.3.0. CAOs are published on the CASA website (casa.gov.au/avreg/rules/orders).

Even gyroplanes and gyrogliders, administered by the Australian Sport Rotorcraft Association must be flown by a pilot holding a certificate issued by ASRA after being trained by an ASRA-authorized flying school.

Whopper #3: New regulations due to be introduced in 2005 will not require pilots of ultralight helicopters to hold any form of licence or require any formal training.

The new pilot licensing regulations in CASR part 61 proposed for introduction next year will still require all pilots

to hold a licence or certificate issued by an appropriate authority with endorsements to verify they have met the knowledge and skill levels necessary. Unlicensed prospective pilots need not wait until 2005: they should find out now how to obtain a licence (go to CASA's website at casa.gov.au/avreg/fcl).

Whopper #4: All helicopters will have to be fitted with tamper-proof time recording devices.

This claim is premature. A number of helicopter accidents appear to have been caused by vital components failing before reaching their recommended service life, and there's anecdotal evidence that under reporting of time in service could have been involved.

Although the fitting of tamper-proof time recording devices is required in New Zealand, CASA is approaching the matter cautiously. The types of repetitive loads placed on helicopter components might also be a contributing factor to accidents, but such loads cannot be tracked by using simple time-in-service recorders alone.

Whatever solutions are proposed will be initiated by the standards consultative committee, a joint CASA-industry

forum set up to involve the aviation industry in developing safety regulations. If you are interested in this topic, contact your representative on the SCC (details at rrp.casa.gov.au/scc) and monitor developments by subscribing to CASA's email notification service at rrp.casa.gov.au/alertme.

Helicopters are playing an increasing role in the Australian civil aviation fleet.

Over the past 20 years, their numbers have tripled and their flying hours have doubled.

While light utility helicopters make up half the fleet of registered helicopters in Australia, they were involved in 72 per cent of helicopter accidents between January 1985 and December 2003. Most of those accidents involved collisions with terrain or obstacles such as trees and powerlines, and, to a lesser extent, engine malfunction. The ATSB has identified aircraft handling and maintenance/repair/design/construction as factors that contributed to most of the accidents.

The good news is that the overall accident trend shows an improvement since 1990.

Let's kill the myths and not let flying without a licence become a significant hazard.