



REGULATORY PROGRAM

Buying and importing a foreign aircraft for operation under Part 43



on things to consider when buying and importing a foreign aircraft for use in private or aerial work operations, a limited category aircraft, or any other aircraft to which Part 43 of the Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998 (CASR) will apply.

or IFR capability, new type certificated aircraft prices can be a disincentive, however the used aircraft market provides an alternative path to aircraft ownership.

Most used aircraft imports come from the United States of America (USA). The used aircraft market in the USA is extensive, and many aircraft are attractively priced. Aircraft on offer include from small amateur-built aircraft, vintage aircraft, a wide range of 4–6 seat Cessna and Pipers to multi-engine aircraft.

Who should read this information sheet?

- › People buying and importing an aircraft used for private or aerial work operations or limited category aircraft (for example, WHR aircraft)
- › Registered operators of such aircraft
- › Licensed aircraft maintenance engineers

Australia does not have a large domestic aircraft manufacturing sector. Apart from a few light sport aircraft (LSA) and ultralight kit manufacturers, Australians rely on the local used aircraft market, foreign used aircraft or new imported aircraft.

Most new imported aircraft are manufactured as LSA which are limited to 2 occupants and VFR operations only.

For people who want 4 or more seats, higher performance

Things you should consider before buying a used aircraft

1. Before buying a used aircraft in the USA – or anywhere else – you should consider the following:
 - whether the aircraft is eligible for an Australian certificate of airworthiness (CofA).
 - to be eligible for a standard CofA, the aircraft must have a type certificate (TC) that is supported by a TC holder.
 - if there is no TC holder, the aircraft can still be eligible for a standard CofA if it is of a type or model that has previously been issued a CofA in the standard category





- if the aircraft is an amateur built aircraft, it is eligible for a special CofA in the experimental category if it has previously been registered as an amateur-built aircraft
 - you can engage the services of a CASA CofA delegate for guidance in determining the best way forward for gaining an Australian CofA. A list of [CofA delegates](#) is available on the CASA website
2. whether the aircraft, other than amateur-built, has a valid data plate and the details on the data plate match the aircraft – this is important!

Getting the aircraft to Australia

The options are:

- › the aircraft can be ferried
- › the aircraft can be packed into a container.

Both options have their benefits. If you are considering an overseas purchase, contact a few ferry operators and containerising services for advice and costings.

For multi-engine aircraft, ferrying is usually the preferred method due to the extensive dismantling required for containerising.

Most single engine aircraft are shipped in a container however they can be fitted with ferry tanks and flown; once again, make your enquiries about the costs, risks and relative benefits of both options.

Once the aircraft arrives in Australia



Once the aircraft arrives in Australia or is off-loaded from a ship, it must undergo customs and quarantine inspections. It is advisable to engage a customs agent who is familiar with aircraft importation as delays may incur demurrage costs.

It would also be advisable to speak to the ferry operator, containerising service provider or a person who has previously imported an aircraft.

An application for a certificate of airworthiness must be made. A certificate of airworthiness demonstrates that the aircraft meets the airworthiness standards that apply to the aircraft. An application may only be made by the aircraft registration holder (or the owner of an aircraft that is registered with a sports aviation body). Therefore, the aircraft must be registered before an application is made.

What you need to consider before applying for a CofA

Before applying for a CofA, you must:

- › ensure the aircraft has been removed from a foreign register
 - obtain documentation from the country of registration NAA to that effect.
- › register the aircraft – it is a good idea to reserve a registration mark once you have committed to purchase an aircraft.
- › on arrival, ensure that the aircraft data plate is attached and correct as previously mentioned
- › affix a registration identification plate in accordance with

chapter 4 of the Part 45 Manual of Standards (fireproof plate displaying the registration mark)

- › have an annual inspection carried out and approved for return to service by a Part 145 maintenance organisation approved to perform annual inspections or a holder of a CASA issued inspection authorisation.

What you need to do if repairs and modifications have been carried out on the aircraft prior to its arrival in Australia

If major repairs or modifications have been carried out on the aircraft, the aircraft's maintenance records must include a copy of the approved design data for the work. If the design data is publicly available, such as an Airworthiness Directive (AD) or a Supplemental Type Certificate (STC), the records only need to show sufficient information to enable a person to identify and access the data.

Minor repairs and modifications do not require data approved under CASR Part 21; however, the maintenance records should state what data was used for the purpose.

What you need to do if the modifications or repairs to the aircraft are not recorded

If a major repair or modification is not documented, you will need to either:

- › restore the aircraft to its unmodified condition, or
- › arrange to have the work assessed and design approval provided by an authorised subpart 21.M person.

If you are importing a restoration project, the documentation is less critical, however the data plate requirements are still valid. If undocumented modifications or repairs have been incorporated, the same provisions will apply as mentioned above.

How to apply for a CofA

To apply for a CoA, application can be made to either a 21.176 authorised person or by submitting a completed CASA Form 717 – Standard Certificate of Airworthiness to CASA.

Additional information on applying for a CoA can be found in

Advisory Circular AC 21-02

A list of authorised persons is available on the CASA website at [Airworthiness delegates search | Civil Aviation Safety Authority \(casa.gov.au\)](#)

For information about the issue of special certificates of airworthiness for limited category aircraft, light sport aircraft, or amateur-built aircraft, please direct enquiries to the industry association that administers the kind of aircraft, such as the Sport Aircraft Association of Australia or the Australian Warbird Association Limited. Certain industry associations are approved by CASA as self-administering aviation organisations and may issue these certificates for the kinds of aircraft they administer.

Disclaimer:

The content provided in the information sheet is a guide only as to how the rules may work in practice once Part 43 is made and commences.

