

Lifetime licence time bomb

Want to keep flying an EASA aircraft after 8 April 2018, but still only got your national lifetime licence? Over 6,000 pilots face being grounded if they don't convert in time...

According to the CAA, there are over 6,000 UK pilots who hold national lifetime licences but who don't have the equivalent EASA licence. That isn't a problem for anybody who wants to exclusively fly non-EASA aircraft – basically, Annex II aircraft like microlights, light gyroplanes, amateur-built, ex-military, foot-launched, vintage types meeting specific date criteria and some which the CAA describes as, 'Built or modified for scientific or novel purposes'. But if you want to fly an EASA aircraft after 8 April 2018, ie in a couple of months, you'll need an EASA licence of some kind.

The good news is that the conversion process is relatively straightforward, not too expensive – in aviation terms, at least – and the turnaround time from the CAA is currently running at about ten working days, although that's unlikely to be the case if all 6,000 pilots decide to apply for theirs in the week running up to 8 April.

So, it's time to stop putting off the inevitable – it isn't going away, whatever happens with Brexit and EASA – and get a (smaller) lifetime *European Union Flight Crew Licence* in its own little blue wallet. Before kicking off the procedure,

you'll have a couple of decisions to take, the first of which is what licence do you actually want?

The choice is essentially between an EASA LAPL or an EASA PPL. If you have an IMC rating (now known as an IR(R) – Instrument Rating (Restricted)) you'll need at least an EASA PPL as it can't be added to an EASA LAPL.

There are a couple of ways of proceeding. You can either download, print and complete form *SRG1104*, then send it in, along with all required documents, of which more later. Or you can fill in the online form and submit it, and the required documents (plus, of course, the payment) online – holders of commercial licences can use the CAA's e-licensing system. You can also visit in person, but there's an extra charge in addition to the normal processing fee – £100 for a visit booked in advance, or £200 for an appointment booked on the day, and there's also a £25 application-checking service available.

We popped along to the CAA at Gatwick, filled in some forms, talked through some common mistakes and walked out with a shiny new EASA PPL...



Above Time's up for the old 'poo brown' licence if you want to fly an EASA aircraft
Below The ever-helpful Suzie Brown from CAA licensing talking me through the steps required to convert

Filling in the basics...

Once you accept that the forms aren't trying to catch you out – they aren't ATPL exams, after all – its pretty straightforward stuff.

Sections one to three are easy enough and just concern your personal details – you'll need your CAA reference number and a current medical. CAA staff will check that your AME has entered your details on its system.

Here, given that my SEP Land was valid on my CAA licence, the date of test (something I'd previously searched for) was N/A, but I still needed to fill in the details of the examiner who signed my certificate of revalidation.

Keep that old licence!

Section six is where you state which licence you're applying for. There's also a box, which I strongly suggest you tick, which says that you wish to retain your UK *National Pilot's Licence*. Frankly none of us know what regulations will change in future, and a valid UK national licence and self-declared medical is all you need to fly Annex II aircraft in the UK.

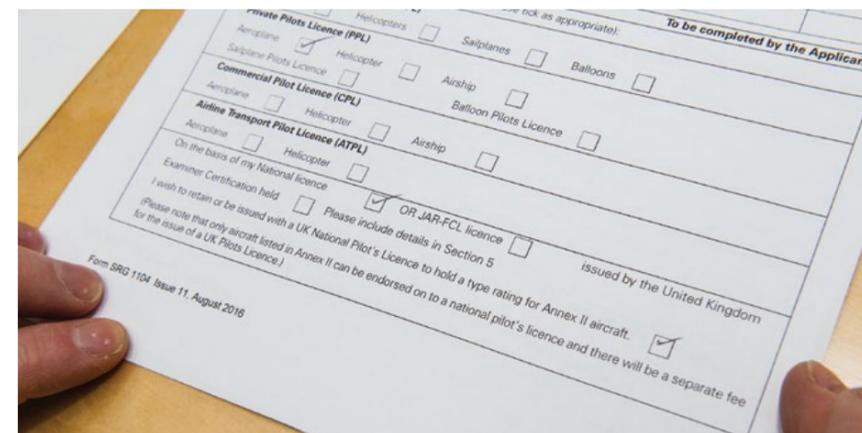
That seems like a great fallback option, particularly as you only have to invest in a little ink in order to tick that particular box.

Hours and hours of fun

Page three of the application form is all about the ratings, certificates and hours that you have.

The first two pages should be pretty straightforward, but the bit about hours could involve a lot of time trawling through old logbooks, if you've filled out a few.

Luckily, this isn't an audit of your logbook and you don't have to work it out to hours, minutes and seconds, so a good approximation will be fine.



8.33 – IT'S TIME FOR TRIG

Meet the Mandate – Order Today



TY91 – 8.33 VHF



TY96 – 8.33 VHF

Superior features and warranty – made in the UK

Contact your Approved Trig Dealer now
www.trig-avionics.com



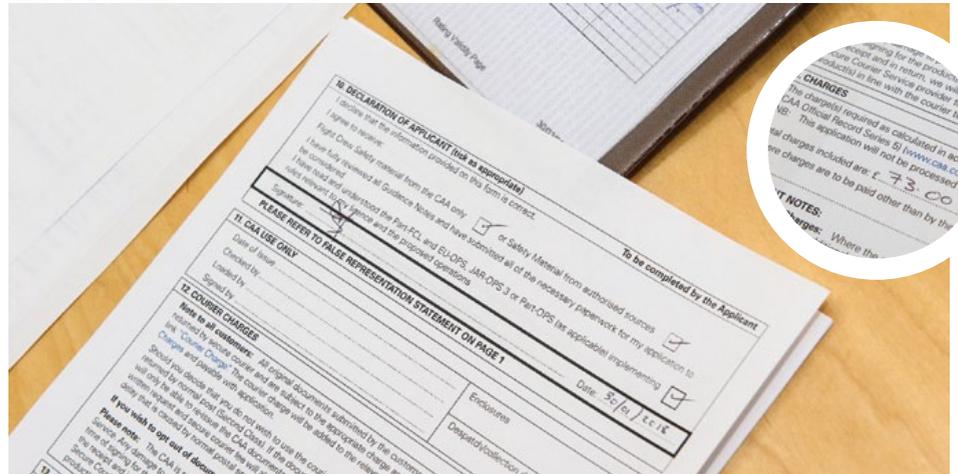
I do solemnly declare...

This is the serious bit, where you sign, declaring that all the information you've given is correct.

More importantly, this is the bit which would, undoubtedly, be tagged as evidence, should you decide to lie about stuff in order to get yourself more of something that you shouldn't have.

Obviously, that isn't the sort of thing you or I would do, but if you know anyone who might, tell them not to!

The cost for a PPL is £73, a LAPL £41 and a professional licence is £139. This is a one-off cost as it's a lifetime licence – a bit like one you're converting from!

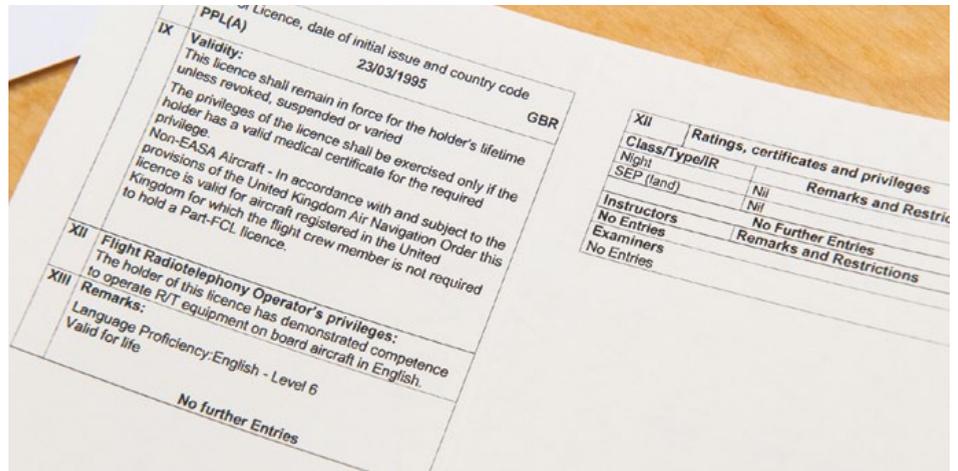


Mind your language!

And now the fun part. Once you've completed the application and paid your money, the nice people in CAA licensing will go away and check that everything's in order.

A note about Language Proficiency – English Level 6 – apparently, there are still some people who haven't had their ability to speak English properly assessed.

If it's in order, then your EU *Flight Crew Licence* will be issued. If you've lapsed ratings, they'll still appear on your licence, but on another page, so worry not, your IR(R) or MEP won't disappear completely and can be revalidated.



Step away from the scissors

Your licence comes with a small, blue wallet. Both the pieces of paper and the plastic sleeves are smaller than the old national licence – you know, the ones which were issued in the 'poo brown' wallets with the sticky sleeves that took the ink off your prized paperwork.

However, whatever you do, don't cut up the bits of paper so that they fit in the supplied sleeves, as that apparently invalidates the whole lot...



Useful links

As noted, the process for converting your licence is actually pretty straightforward, and the CAA offers downloadable SRG1104 forms, guidance and even a web portal so you can submit your application online:

- **CAA Form SRG1104**
www.tinyurl.com/CAASRG1104
- **CAA guide to converting**
www.tinyurl.com/CAAconversionguide
- **CAA certified copy format**
www.tinyurl.com/CAAcertifiedcopies
- **CAA portal for online conversions**
www.tinyurl.com/CAAconversionportal

What not to forget

Most people will submit their application online or by post, and that means sending in certified copies of various documents – proof of identity (passport, EU photographic driving licence or EU identity card); a copy of your current licence, including a certified copy of certificate of test(s) or certificate of revalidation; a copy of your medical certificate; and proof of your language proficiency.

Copies of the required documents can be certified by the head of training at an ATO, the holder of the registration at a registered facility or a UK-approved examiner.

The certifier will have to write, "I have seen the original document and I certify that this is a complete and accurate copy of the original", and supply his or her signature, name and position.

It's expected that the list of appropriate people will be extended, so keep checking on the CAA webpage for details. 