

Importing a Foreign Factory Built Microlight or Gyroplane

Before accepting aircraft, aircraft parts, equipment, or modifications of foreign origin the CAA must be satisfied that the product has been designed and manufactured to standards equivalent to those required of a UK product. For a microlight aeroplane, we will require compliance with British Civil Airworthiness Requirements ([BCAR Section S](#), (or alternatively [JAR-VLA](#), provided that the aircraft meets the definition of a microlight given in paragraph BCAR Section S paragraph 2) For a gyroplane, we will require compliance with [BCAR Section T](#). The CAA must also be satisfied that in-service support from the manufacturer will be equivalent to that provided by similar UK companies.

Where we have experience of working satisfactorily with another country on such matters, the CAA can have confidence that an equivalent level of safety is being assured by the Foreign Authority. In such cases, reliance can be placed on the Foreign Authority to the extent that investigation work by the CAA into the airworthiness of the product can be reduced. Unfortunately, in the case of microlights and gyroplanes, (as distinct from aeroplanes with Certificates of Airworthiness), there are no internationally recognised standards. Each State deals with them under its own national procedures and to its own standards.

Where the CAA does not have experience of working on the particular class of aircraft with the non-UK Authority, it is necessary for the CAA to consider carefully the appropriate level of investigation. Clearly, the CAA will require to see evidence that the product has been shown to comply with an appropriate set of requirements, such as [BCAR Section S](#) or [Section T](#) as appropriate. However, it is equally important that the CAA can be satisfied that the manufacturer's quality control procedures, as regulated by their home Authority, assure that the approved design and manufacturing standard is achieved for each individual example of the product bound for the UK.

Where the product is the first item to be accepted from a particular country, or is a significantly different category of product from that accepted previously, it will be necessary for the CAA to examine closely the quality control of the manufacturer, and the methods used by the Foreign Authority to ensure that the company is operating in accordance with these quality procedures. Clearly, such an exercise will involve correspondence between CAA and the foreign organisations, and in some cases, may require CAA surveyors to visit the manufacturer and the Foreign Authority. Such work will incur costs which the CAA has to recover from the applicant(s).

The processes and documentation requirements for the importing of a microlight aeroplane or gyroplane are very similar to those for a Type Certificated machine. The important difference is that most microlights and gyroplanes operate under permissions for flight that are not ICAO Certificates of Airworthiness (i.e. not subject to international recognition). Consequently, it is necessary for the CAA to agree with the national Authority of the exporting State, the form of documentation that will be issued in place of the usual Export Certificate of Airworthiness. This will have to include a formal declaration from the company responsible for the aircraft's design, agreeing to provide Continued Airworthiness support to such aircraft in this country.

In parallel with the setting up of these export/import arrangements, it will be necessary for the aircraft design organisation to justify that the aircraft either directly complies with [BCAR Section S/BCAR Section T](#), or is deemed to be equivalent to such a standard (e.g. by complying with another code of requirements acceptable to the CAA).

After CAA acceptance that the type design complies with the design and manufacturing requirements, individual aircraft shipped in to this country are likely to have to be re-assembled. Competent parties, such as the British Microlight Aircraft Association ([BMAA](#)) or the Light Aircraft Association ([LAA](#)), will have to be identified who will accept responsibility for inspection and make declarations to the effect that each re-assembled aircraft complies with the appropriate defined design standard. The arrangements for this will have to be agreed with the CAA.

In summary, the most convenient way to proceed with UK approval of a foreign built microlight/gyroplane aircraft is for the foreign manufacturer to make application to the CAA through their local Airworthiness Authority. This application should be supported by a definition of the airworthiness requirements they intend to show compliance with, and the means by which the design and manufacture in the exporting country will be managed and the quality assured. The CAA should then be in a position to begin the process of investigating the equivalence of standards, and Validation of the approval of the products.

An application information pack for approval of aircraft can be obtained from CAA [Applications and Approvals](#).