



GUIDANCE: OPERATING ON A PERMIT TO FLY COMPARED WITH A CERTIFICATE OF AIRWORTHINESS

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1. Introduction

A Certificate of Airworthiness is an internationally recognised document, which confirms that the airworthiness of the aircraft has been demonstrated to a level, which affords the travelling public with an appropriate level of safety. A Cof A is granted after a suitably accredited organisation demonstrates that the aircraft complies with the appropriate internationally recognised design code. The definition of the design is termed the "approved data" and it includes a definition of the Maintenance system and the Flight Manual. In order for a Certificate of Airworthiness to remain valid a "Type Certificate Holder" must be nominated to assume the responsibilities for continued airworthiness and defect monitoring in service.

To be granted a Permit to Fly, all that is required is for a person of recognised competence to assess the aircraft as airworthy. The way in which this requirement is interpreted varies from one country to the next. In the UK, the CAA allows organisations such as the LAA to make a pragmatic assessment, which considers the way in which the aircraft will be operated.

The change from operating on a C of A to a Permit to Fly results in additional limitations on the operation of the aircraft. In consideration of this, strict adherence to the maintenance system stipulated by the manufacturer is no longer mandated. As a consequence the owner is able to minimise the operating costs by taking a more practical role in the upkeep of the aircraft, under the supervision of a LAA inspector.

2. Additional Limitations

The ANO section 9 provides the 'letter of the law' which, thankfully is interpreted in CAP 733. The basic limitations are stated below. Some specific concessions are permitted, the CAA publications should be studied for this detail*.

- Flight by day under Visual Flight Rules only
- Aircraft cannot be used for Public Transport or Aerial Work
- The Permit to Fly is valid for UK airspace only.
- No overflight of crowds.
- A Permit Maintenance Release must be issued before return to service following maintenance.
- The aircraft must be operated in accordance with the published limitations and procedures appropriate to the aircraft type

3. Operational Benefits

- The owner can more easily perform his own maintenance and repairs.
- Repairs and Modifications, including the use of "non-approved" parts can be approved by LAA Engineering. This provides a less onerous route than available though the CAA at a cost that is more affordable for the recreational flyer.

The ANO and CAP 733 can be viewed at the following websites:

<http://www.caa.co.uk/docs/33/CAP393.PDF> <http://www.caa.co.uk/docs/33/CAP733.PDF>

*Note that before July 2010, Permit aircraft were not allowed to fly over congested areas. A CAA exemption now exists (E3175, or as renewed) that allows certain permit aircraft (microlight aeroplanes, amateur-built aeroplanes up to 1500 kg, and factory-built aeroplanes up to 1500 kg that were previously on a Certificate of Airworthiness) to overfly congested areas, subject to the normal rules of the air. These rules include retaining the capability to glide clear and maintaining minimum clearances with obstacles. This exemption does not apply when test flying or check-flying the aircraft. The exemption overrides any statement to the contrary in existing Permit to Fly documents.