

LAA INSPECTOR APPLICATION INFORMATION SHEET

Introduction

Continuance of the success of the LAA's CAA Engineering A8-26 approval, depends on the LAA Inspectorship's ability and success in maintaining high standards of airworthiness throughout the LAA fleet of many hundreds of aircraft and projects. Owners and builders rely on LAA Inspectors, for advice and guidance on a far-ranging variety of skills, disciplines and procedures, never more so than when struggling through the building and completion stages of an aircraft under construction.

Whilst not undervaluing the responsibilities that licenced engineers, working on Certificate of Airworthiness type aircraft, undoubtedly bear; we think that due to the nature of Permit to Fly aircraft, the judgement of LAA Inspectors is called for a lot more than that of a regular licenced engineer. This is due to inherent lack of associated Illustrated Parts Catalogues and Maintenance Manuals, as well as minimalist procedures for Permit to Fly aircraft. Consequently, the job of an LAA Inspector, is often more challenging.

For this reason, the LAA Inspectorship cannot be considered a 'training ground' for aircraft engineers not already possessing a wealth of knowledge and a good degree of practical experience. This can usually only be gathered over a number of years in the industry or sport.

It must also be recognised, that the LAA is an amateur-based organisation working on behalf of its members and so, its approved Inspectors need not only to be experts, but must also be experts who are willing to help.

Inspector Applicant Qualifications and Experience

Knowledge and experience of working with LAA-type aircraft must be demonstrated. Applicants, ideally, should have worked for some years within a General Aviation maintenance organisation and preferably, be still employed in the industry.

Other areas of experience will be taken into account, along with relevant courses that have been attended and the holding of BGA and BMAA Inspector approvals. Experienced amateur aircraft builders who have successfully completed a number of LAA projects and can show a good 'track record', may be considered. Persons with a particular skill or expertise may be considered for a specific approval in exceptional circumstances.

A good working knowledge of Permit to Fly certification requirements and a cheerful tolerance of paperwork is an essential pre-requisite.



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Inspector Application Procedure

An LAA Inspector's Application Form (LAA APP/1) is to be completed, signed and submitted to the LAA Chief Inspector. The Chief Inspector will then acknowledge receipt and will review the application accordingly.

If the application is successful, the Chief Inspector will approach the two named referees for references. If the references are found suitable, the Chief Inspector will invite the applicant to LAA HQ for an induction, interview and examination. The examination paper covers various aspects of aircraft engineering, maintenance, operation and certification. This visit will take most of a day to complete.

For applicants that pass the interview and exam, the Chief Inspector will issue an LAA Inspector number, confirm the authorisations granted and provide relevant guidance material.

If at any time in the application procedure, the applicant does not reach the desired standard, the Chief Inspector will advise the applicant accordingly and if appropriate, will provide guidance on reapplying or resitting the interview and examination.

An application may be rejected or accepted at any stage in the process. The decision rests with the Chief Inspector and their decision is final.

General

The LAA regards the judicious selection of LAA Inspectors, to be a vitally important exercise. Due to the workload undertaken by the LAA Engineering Department, the application procedure can take a couple of months to complete.

Unfortunately, there is a finite limit to the number of Inspectors that the LAA may handle. On this basis alone, an otherwise acceptable application may be turned down, particularly from an area that is already well populated with LAA Inspectors or for a particular aircraft type, for which there is already a surplus of Inspectors. It is not LAA policy to approve a person, solely to operate as an Inspector within a company in which they are employed or not to just inspect one aircraft or project with which they have a personal connection.

The granting of an LAA Inspector's approval, is made on an amateur basis. An Inspector is of course entitled to regain their expenses, but any charges made after that (unless the Inspector is also a licenced engineer and/or is working within a professional organisation) should be levelled in the spirit of the LAA.

It should be remembered that an Inspector's role is to inspect for quality and conformity, not carry out maintenance tasks on LAA aircraft.

Final Note

Inspectors are permitted to 'sign off' their own work, but they are not permitted to sign out the build stages of their own project. Unless they are a licenced engineer, they may not sign off the Permit to Fly revalidation inspection of their own aircraft.

All Inspector approvals are renewed annually at the end of March, each year. As part of this, the Inspector fee must be paid on request. This fee is currently set at £40.00, but is subject to change each year. This is payable on first approval, although may be reduced at the first approval, if less than a couple of months remain until the end of the fee period. All LAA Inspectors are required to be current members of the LAA. Application for LAA membership may be made online from the LAA website. Final approval will depend on the applicant's membership being in place, although applicants may wait until the outcome of an application is known before enrolling.

Applicants will need to demonstrate a full working knowledge of LAA aircraft maintenance certification procedures. A lot of the relevant information can be obtained from the LAA website, with particular reference to the various Technical Leaflets provided in the Engineering Data Library section.

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Quick Reference Guide to Inspector Vital Attributes

- 1. Must possess a wealthy blend of relevant knowledge, experience and/or qualification.*
- 2. Must have a reasonable disposition, especially with regard to identifying and complying with appropriate airworthiness procedures.*
- 3. Require a conscientious and thorough attitude to completing logbooks and other maintenance record requirements.*
- 4. Must have an ability and keenness to source required technical and procedural information.*
- 5. They must have availability of tools and facilities appropriate for any inspection undertaken.*
- 6. They must be physically able, available and willing to serve as an Inspector.*
- 7. Inspectors will be genuinely available to inspect projects and/or aircraft belonging to LAA members.*
- 8. Inspectors must be a current member of the LAA.*