

LAA INSPECTOR APPROVAL SCHEME

INFORMATION LAA/IAS/25 – APRIL 2025

(This information supersedes previous issues, which should be destroyed)

INTRODUCTION

The LAA Inspector approval scheme is devised to be as simple as possible, but even so, it is still not possible to describe the normal limits of approval in the confines of an Inspector's online 'Inspector Approval Matrix' on the online LAA Inspector Map. Hence, an Inspector's online approval matrix must be read in conjunction with the latest version of this document. This document is updated and reissued as required, and from April 2025 is LAA/IAS/25. This document is also posted in the LAA website Inspector Zone.

LAA Inspector online approval matrices define the type and scope of approval of the Inspector concerned and indicate this by the entry of ticks in an approval. The codes used on this online Inspector matrix should be cross-referenced with this document.

INTERPRETATION OF TEXT ON ONLINE INSPECTOR MATRICES

Inspection Categories: (Left Hand Column on online Inspector Approval Matrix)

Build Stages

When ticked, this covers build stage inspections (of types covered in the aircraft groups defined in the first column of the online Inspector Approval matrix) as provided in the LAA Build Inspection Record issued to an LAA registered project. These stages do not constitute a CAA-recognised 'certification', but are a confirmation for LAA purposes that an LAA Inspector, acceptable for the task, has inspected the project at that stage and assessed it to be satisfactory in respect of conformity and quality.

Maintenance and Permit Revalidation Recommendations

When ticked, this covers all maintenance, repairs and replacements (of types covered in the aircraft groups given in the first column of the online Inspector Approval matrix) and includes aircraft 'rebuilt'. This approval can be for airframes only, engines only, or both. Only Inspectors covered for the 'airframe' of the aircraft in question may sign the *Airworthiness Review* recommending revalidation of the Permit to Fly.

When engine approval is held in this category, it covers, for certificated engine types (e.g. Continental, Lycoming) all routine maintenance, repairs and replacements up to, but not including, dismantling of crankcase. For non-certificated engines (e.g. VW, Rotax), it covers all routine maintenance, repairs and replacements including complete tear-down and rebuild subject to adequate tools, facilities and appropriate manufacturer's technical literature being available.

Inspectors should note that approval in this category allows the work involved in installing a major repair or a modification to be signed off from a 'conformity and quality' point of view. It does not permit an Inspector to sign for the 'design' itself. The design of all major repairs and modifications must be approved by LAA Engineering.

Final Inspection Before First Flight

When ticked, this signifies that the Inspector is approved to sign the relevant declaration in the LAA Build Inspection Record (or the Permit 'first issue' application form for older projects) of types covered in the aircraft groups defined in the first column of the online Inspector Approval matrix. This signature constitutes a recommendation that the LAA should authorise commencement of test flying. Approval to make this recommendation automatically includes the installed engine for any aircraft covered.

Aircraft and Engine Groups: (First Column of online Inspector Approval Matrix)

For approvals not falling into any of the groups below, see Note 1.

A-A = All Fixed-Wing Airframes

Apart from the exceptions described in Notes 2, 9 and 10, this covers all fixed-wing airframes whether constructed of wood, metal and/or composite (fibre reinforced plastic). All other fixed-wing aircraft groups are sub-groups of A-A, (but see Notes 2, 9 and 10).

AC1 = Fixed-Wing Airframes – Simple Composite

Apart from the exceptions described in Notes 2, 9 and 10, this covers all fixed-wing airframes of primarily composite (fibre reinforced plastic) construction which are considered by LAA to be 'simple'. See 'TL2.33 – Inspector Categories for Type' for a definitive list of 'simple' and 'non-simple' composite aircraft types.

AC2 = Fixed-Wing Airframes – All Composite

Apart from the exceptions described in Notes 2, 9 and 10, this covers all fixed-wing airframes of primarily composite (fibre reinforced plastic) construction, not limited to just those in aircraft group AC1.

A-M = Fixed-Wing Airframes - Metal

Apart from the exceptions described in Notes 2, 9 and 10, this covers all fixed-wing airframes of primarily rivetted sheet metal construction.

A-W = Fixed-Wing Airframes - Wood

Apart from the exceptions described in Notes 2, 9 and 10, this covers all fixed-wing airframes of primarily wooden construction.

A-MW = Fixed-Wing Airframes – Metal & Wood Aircraft

Apart from the exceptions described in Notes 2, 9 and 10, this covers all fixed-wing airframes that are primarily fabric-covered, with a fuselage of metal-tube construction and wings of wood, metal or mixed wood and metal construction.

E = All Engines in Fixed-Wing Aircraft

Apart from the exceptions described in Notes 2, 9 and 10, this covers all engines regardless of type, including two and four stroke, radial, rotary etc. Maintenance and Permit Revalidation Recommendations is the only inspection category available for engines. The inspection categories Build Stages and Final Inspection Before First Flight are not available for engines - see Final Inspection Before First Flight on page 1.

FBG = Factory-Built Gyroplanes

This covers LAA gyroplanes that have originally been manufactured by an approved company and certified to BCAR Section T. Approval is available in one or both of two categories; M - Maintenance and R - Airworthiness Review. See Supplement to Inspector's Matrix Scope of Approval - Description. The only inspection category available is Maintenance and Permit Revalidation Recommendations.

FBM = Factory-Built Microlights

This covers LAA microlight aircraft that have originally been manufactured by an approved company. Approval is only effective if the Inspector's approval also covers the aircraft type in question. The only inspection category available is Maintenance and Permit Revalidation Recommendations, and this automatically includes the installed engine.

G = Gyroplanes & their Engines

Apart from the exceptions in Note 2, this covers all home-built gyroplanes including their installed engine.

4SA = Four-Seat Aircraft

This covers all four-seat (or more) aircraft, as defined by the maximum number of occupants for which the aircraft is intended to be cleared. Approval is only effective if the Inspector's approval

also covers the aircraft type in question. Build Stages is the only inspection category available for this aircraft group as *Maintenance and Permit Revalidation Recommendations* and *Final Inspection Before First Flight* are covered by the generic aircraft groups.

NOTES

1. Non-Standard Approvals

Approvals which do not readily fall into any of the above aircraft and engine groups, normally those that are aircraft or engine type-specific, will be described using the last column of the approval matrix, and should be self-explanatory.

2. Factory-built Microlights, Factory-built Gyroplanes and 4-Seat Aircraft

Build Stages Approvals to sign for *Maintenance and Permit Revalidation Recommendations* for factory-built microlights and factory-built gyroplanes, and the approval for *Build Stages* of four-seat (or more) aircraft are not included in any of the generic aircraft approval groups. When approval is held for these groups, it will be indicated by the use of codes FBG, FBM and 4SA, as appropriate. The reason for this in the case of four-seat aircraft is to provide the LAA with an opportunity to highlight to an Inspector the extra level of responsibility inherent with an aircraft potentially carrying a number of non-aviation-aware passengers. Similarly, for factory-built microlights and factory-built gyroplanes, being able to conduct commercial flight training, specific type experience is normally required prior to an Inspector gaining approval in these aircraft groups. Inspectors wishing to inspect any of these aircraft should contact the Head of Continuing Airworthiness & Inspection (*Chief Inspector*) for an application form.

3. Changes carried out in April 2025

In April 2025, significant changes to the LAA Inspector Approval categories were made to coincide with the change to an online Permit Revalidation system. These involved the deletion of the previous categories **M** (Microlight & their engines), **K** (Kit aircraft & their engines) and **V** (Vintage aircraft & their engines). Furthermore, the **A-MW** (Fixed Wing Airframes – Metal & Wood) category was introduced, as described above.

4. Signing for Own Work or Aircraft

There is no restriction on LAA Inspectors inspecting and signing off their own work, as long as the certification of the work is within the scope of their approval, except for the following: LAA policy is that whilst any suitably-approved Inspector, even if the Owner, may sign off 'between-Permit' work in the logbook and on worksheets, only Inspectors who do not own or part-own the aircraft may sign for the Airworthiness Review, unless the Inspector is also a current licensed engineer. No Inspector is permitted to sign off the build stages of any project that they own, or part own.

5. Approval Extensions and Authorisations

Inspectors are welcome to request an extension to their current scope of approval whenever they feel more experience has been gained or circumstances have changed. Inspectors should write to the Head of Continuing Airworthiness & Inspection (*Chief Inspector*) to request an application form. Amendments will be confirmed (or denied) by letter, effective straight away, with the Inspector's online approval matrix showing amendments immediately.

It is possible, in exceptional circumstances, to authorise an Inspector to make a particular one-off certification that is outside the normal scope of their approval. Grant of such an authorisation would be subject to suitable experience and the availability of tools, manuals and facilities etc and good reason being given. Inspectors should apply, in writing, to the Head of Continuing Airworthiness & Inspection (*Chief Inspector*) on a case-by-case basis.

6. Maintenance of Standards

An Inspector approval is issued because it has been shown, and believed by the LAA, that an individual has the necessary experience, qualification and good intention to be awarded such approval. However, Inspectors should be aware that non-compliance with applicable procedures or failure to maintain adequate standards can lead to suspension or revocation of their Inspector approval.

7. Certifications, Confirmations and Recommendations

Handed down by the CAA via LAA Engineering, the fundamental privilege afforded by the approval awarded to an LAA Inspector is the ability to sign a PMR (Permit Maintenance Release). This is a legally recognised certification statement that is required after maintenance as a 'Condition' of a Permit to Fly. Only an LAA Inspector can sign a PMR for an LAA aircraft and an aircraft's Permit would be rendered invalid if this Condition was not met, and flight would therefore be illegal. LAA Inspectors are also approved by the LAA to sign various in-house certifications, confirmations and recommendations, such as project build stages, weight schedules and duplicate inspections.

The LAA Inspector approval system is necessarily simple and it is inevitable that some Inspectors will find that their approval covers them for inspection of a type for which they have little or no prior experience. The LAA does not expect, for example, that an Inspector cleared to inspect 'all engines' will be likely to have a thorough knowledge of each and every type of engine in use in an LAA aircraft. It is therefore incumbent on Inspectors to undertake inspection only of those tasks, airframes, engines etc. with which they are either already familiar or are prepared to research to an appropriate extent first. Inspectors are not obliged to 'inspect on demand', and Inspectors being asked to oversee a project or inspection about which they feel uncomfortable should decline to be involved and point the LAA member in the direction of a more suitable Inspector, or otherwise advise them to contact LAA Engineering.

8. Inspector Categories for Aircraft Type

'TL2.33 – *Inspector Categories for Type*' provides a definitive list of which Inspector Approval categories are required to inspect each aircraft type on the LAA fleet.

9. Aircraft Not Included in Generic 'Aircraft Groups' Described in this Document

Due to particular maintenance needs, various specific aircraft types are not included in any of the generic aircraft groups described in this document. Below is a list of aircraft types affected, current as of April 2025. Approval to inspect any of the aircraft identified in this Note 9 will be signified by a Letter of Authorisation, on a type-by-type basis. Inspectors wishing to inspect any of these types should contact the Head of Continuing Airworthiness & Inspection (*Chief Inspector*) to request an application form.

DH88 Comet Racer

DH84 Dragon

P-2 Kraguj

Pilatus P3-03

NAMC CJ-6A Nanchang

Edge 540

DHC-1 Chipmunk

Miles Gemini

Scottish Aviation Bulldog

Yak 18A

Yak 50

Yak 52

Yak 55

WHE Airbuggy

Wallis WA-122/WA-116

10. Aircraft Approved for Night/IFR Flight

Permit Revalidation recommendations and inspections on aircraft approved for Night/IFR flight need to be overseen by Inspectors with a Night/IFR endorsement on their Inspector's approval. Endorsement is signified by individual letter. Inspectors seeking to obtain a Night/IFR endorsement should contact the Head of Continuing Airworthiness & Inspection (*Chief Inspector*) to request an application form