

BGA Airworthiness and Maintenance Procedure	AMP 1- 10
IMPORTING AND EXPORTING AIRCRAFT	

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Introduction

Importing a Sailplane, motor glider or aeroplane is a significant activity.

Since Brexit, (1st January 2021) the rules for exporting or importing aircraft have changed.

For example, the CAA now requires an Export Certificate of Airworthiness (C of A) issued by the National Aviation of Authority of whichever country the aircraft is being imported from. **There are no exemptions!** For exports out of the UK, most countries require a CAA issued (valid for 60 days) Export C of A.

The following is a guide to the process of importing an aircraft into the UK and exporting an aircraft out of the UK.

What is ICAO? (website link found [here](#))

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is an organisation set up after the 2nd World War, it is a formal agreement between 193 countries (that includes all of Europe) on international standards and procedures for Airworthiness, Flight Crew Licensing, Medicals, Airspace design, Certification of aircraft engineers and many other areas of Aviation.

ICAO has a procedure of how aircraft ownership is transferred between the 193 states that now apply to us.

This process is well known to the BGA as it has always applied when importing/exporting aircraft to many countries outside of Europe, eg the USA, Brazil, etc.

Transfer Documents

There are numerous transfer documents required to register an aircraft in another State.

Export C of A

In the ICAO system, the transfer of the aircraft is directly between the two National Aviation Authorities (NAA's). In this example we use the UK CAA for export and German LBA for import.

Shortly before the aircraft is exported to Germany, a CAA aircraft Surveyor will issue the UK export C of A valid, for 60 days.

You then have 60 days to get to Germany and the new owner has to get the LBA aircraft surveyor to inspect the aircraft. This way the aircraft is 'Transferred' directly between the two National Aviation Authorities as mandated by ICAO. The import Survey will check compliance with the German regulations. German registration and manuals etc are required.

The process requires a high degree of coordination between the person selling the aircraft and the person buying it to make sure the 60-day limit is not broken.

Other mandated 'transfer' documents are listed below. Note – an NAA can ask for more!

ARC (EU countries only) The ARC must be valid long enough for the import survey and paperwork to be completed.

Certificate of Deregistration from the previous National Aviation Authority (NAA)

Export C of A issued within the 60 days preceding receipt of the application by the CAA

EASA Form 52 This is for new aircraft only. The EASA Form 52 (Statement of conformity to Type design) is issued by the manufacturer. These aircraft do not have a C of A, so no other transfer documents exist.

Aircrafts Logbooks and records. Must be transferred to the new owner as the only method of proving fatigue life, repairs, and ADs etc.

How to get an export C of A (CAA link [here](#))

The Export C of A is a transfer document. It is not the actual aircraft C of A.

To fly an aircraft with an Export C of A (eg for delivery) it must still have a current Annual/ARC and all other life items and ADs be compliant.

An Export C of A is issued in the UK through a CAA procedure. The BGA has no input. At the time of writing, the cost is £137, and the CAA say it takes 15 working days. Allow at least two months, and that assumes your aircraft paperwork is perfect. The Export C of A is essentially like a very thorough ARC audit that goes through the aircraft's entire history.

For a country to issue the export C of A, the aircraft must first be maintained compliantly with a current annual maintenance and have a current Airworthiness Review Certificate (ARC) that also covers the Export C of A period. Not all countries issue ARCs. The USA does not, but all European countries and the UK do.

Once the aircraft is up to date with its maintenance and certification, the owner can apply to the NAA to issue an export C of A. The NAA appoints a NAA employee (usually an experienced aircraft auditor and engineer) who surveys the aircraft and its paperwork.

Once fully satisfied that it is airworthy and complies with all regulation, the NAA issues an Export C of A that is valid for 60 days only. The aircraft then has 60 days to arrive and be surveyed by the import NAA.

Can I drive to Europe, look at, buy an aircraft, and bring it straight back to the UK?

Not if you want to register it in the UK with the CAA. Using Germany as an example, even if the aircraft has a new Annual and ARC when you look at it, the German owner will need to apply to the LBA for to issue an export C of A. There will be a LBA fee.

Once the LBA surveyor has inspected it, he/she will issue the export C of A valid for 60 days. Only then you can take the aircraft away.

What if I am buying a brand-new aircraft from the EU?

Because new aircraft are not registered anywhere yet (known as Stateless), they cannot hold a C of A or ARC. The factory will issue an EASA form 52 that proves compliance with the type certificate. The UK CAA will survey the aircraft and issue a C of A. But will only actually give the C of A to you when the annual inspection has been done and its first ARC is issued by the BGA inspector.

Deregistering a used aircraft

Be very careful about deregistering an aircraft before you are certain you have all the correct paperwork in place for import. If you deregister it from the LBA, and the aircraft has only one week of ARC validity remaining, or no export C of A issued yet, there will not be usually enough time to complete the import process into the UK.

But because it has been deregistered, the LBA inspector/surveyor cannot issue a new ARC or Export C of A. The LBA will not allow the aircraft back on its register without new transfer documents - that now can no longer be issued by anyone. This will effectively make the aircraft legally Stateless, ie it does not qualify to have a C of A issued in any country. It can happen!

Importing a non-Part 21 (non-EASA) aircraft

Non-Part 21 (non-EASA) gliders are eligible for BGA registration subject to BGA approval and can be issued with a BGA C of A if already a BGA approved type. New non-Part 21 (non-EASA) types can be considered for eligibility by the BGA Technical Committee. If it is a powered aircraft (for instance a Piper PA18 Super Cub), then it must be approved by the CAA using national rules. If in doubt, contact the BGA.

Documentation required for a used aircraft import

The following documentation applies when importing an aircraft. Note that all CAA forms and other airworthiness documents are only available online - see [here](#).

- Export C of A
- All current certificates, logbooks, and maintenance files.
- Current ARC (long enough to complete the process -ideally at least 3 months)
- Flight manual (in English and up to date)
- Maintenance manual (in English and up to date)
- Weighing report
- Contract with BGA CAO (Letter of agreement with BGA)
- BGA airworthiness support form found [here](#)
- Register the aircraft with the BGA before registering with the CAA. BGA AMP Leaflet 3-7 has more details. Do not forget the BGA required fin markings (BGA Op Reg 1-11) found [here](#)
- Registration with CAA using form CA1 after registering with BGA. Found [here](#) Note if the aircraft has a mode S transponder/ADS-B or Flarm already fitted, they will all need updating with the new CAA issued Hex code so they do not transmit their previous (now wrong) registration.
- Non-expiring Certificate of Airworthiness application form found [here](#)
- A self-declared maintenance program (BGA SDMP) details [here](#)
- Radio licence application found [here](#). From Ofcom
- A certificate of de registration from the country of export.
- Insurance (the CAA will want to see this)

During the import process, the following documents will be created or issued:

- CAA issued non-expiring Certificate of Airworthiness
- CAA certificate of registration
- ARC certificate validated or issued by the CAA
- A new aircraft radio license issued by Ofcom
- A self-declared maintenance program (BGA SDMP)

- A letter of agreement with the BGA CAO
- If the aircraft has engines, a new noise certificate

Buying new or used aircraft that does not have an ICAO C of A

Please note that importing aircraft from a non-CofA environment (eg the FAA experimental system) is extremely problematic and might not even be possible. Contact the BGA for advice.

Importing non-Part 21 sailplanes that are BGA approved types.

This can be carried out by the owner supported by the BGA inspector as follows including the compilation of the listed documents.

- Ensure the type of sailplane is BGA type approved. Generally, if the sailplane is type approved in another EU country and holds a national C of A it will be acceptable to the BGA. If you are not sure check prior to purchase.
- Obtain BGA Number and Trigraph
- Display Trigraph or Comp number on fin and BGA number
- Certificate of De-registration
- Export C of A or Current Domestic C of A
- New Weighing report
- Details of any modifications and repairs. BGA form 270 found [here](#)
- Details of equipment fitted. BGA form 271 found [here](#)
- Airworthiness Directives and life limitations report. BGA form 274 found [here](#)
- BGA Checklist. BGA form 275 found [here](#)
- Flight manual (in English version and up to date)
- Maintenance manual (in English version and up to date)
- Current annual maintenance program using the approved maintenance plan (BGA GMP)
- Checklist for annual. BGA form 267 found [here](#)

Notes & Tips

To assist you in deciding whether to purchase an aircraft, it is recommended a BGA inspector who is independent of that aircraft and familiar with the type inspects it prior to purchase. In much the same way as perhaps you would have your car mechanic look at a new car you are thinking of buying. Remember that the decision to buy is yours!

When a glider is imported with a current ARC, the CAA do not issue a new ARC. The CAA validate the old one with the original expiry date. You will need a new ARC before the old one expires.

You must buy a BGA support package to bring it into the BGA CAO (the package includes payment for the next/first ARC)

You must establish a BGA number before applying to the CAA for a G reg (see BGA AMP 3-7)

Some owners mistake the CAA registration document for the non-expiring C of A.

The Sailplane Air Operations rules (Part-SAO) determines does not require imperial instruments, but for flight safety reasons, an Imperial marked ASI (kts) and altimeter (ft/mb) are likely to be sensible changes. Please see the aircraft Flight Manual for details of approved instruments..

If you wish to operate the aircraft on the old EU registration, C of A and ARC you can. But the aircraft must be operated as a foreign aircraft. The BGA (or CAA) is unable to provide any airworthiness support or inspector certification.

Once the aircraft has been de-registered, the C of A and ARC are invalid for flight until a new C of A and ARC are issued.

Buying and selling within the UK

If the glider is "G" registered, you are required by law to notify the CAA and change the registration details. Details are on the back of the registration document.

The seller must notify the CAA, and the purchaser is required to complete an application form (CA1) and pay the appropriate fee to the CAA. For non-Part 21 (non-EASA) sailplanes, CAA notification is not applicable.

The BGA must be advised of the change to ensure accurate records are maintained, so that important airworthiness information can be forwarded to the new owner. Please inform the BGA as soon as possible. It is also necessary to complete a new BGA Letter of Agreement to allow access to the BGA Airworthiness system and CAO. Please call the office if you need any help with that.

BGA
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