

SFCL SAILPLANE PILOTS LICENCE – BGA GUIDANCE FOR LICENCE HOLDERS

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The Sailplane Flight Crew Licensing (SFCL) rules, Acceptable Means of Compliance (AMC) and Guidance Material (GM) is here https://regulatorylibrary.caa.co.uk/2018-1976/Content/Sailplanes_1.htm

SFCL Transition

Leading up to September 2025, the UK will be in a period of transition to SFCL during which the existing BGA pilot certification system will continue to be used. Those who additionally choose to use SFCL licence privileges must fully comply with the SFCL and associated medical and training requirements.

Your Sailplane Pilot Licence (SPL)

Your SFCL compliant Sailplane Pilot Licence (SPL) is issued by the CAA following a recommendation from the BGA. The BGA has checked that the privileges on your SPL match the application recommendation.

As the holder of the licence, it is your responsibility to ensure that you are aware of the associated privileges, any limitations and the rolling recency requirements. The detail is described within the SFCL rules.

Do not cut the licence – the format & layout are stipulated by regulations!

Please note that the following detail is offered as guidance.
Part-SFCL is of course the definitive requirement.

Differences between FCL-SPL/LAPL(S) and the SFCL-SPL

FCL SPL's and LAPL(S)'s issued prior to April 2020 are deemed to be SFCL SPL's. There are differences between what is stated on an FCL-SPL/LAPL(S) and on the SFCL-SPL. See appendix 1 below for a comparison table.

Privileges not stated on the SPL

SFCL requires that launch types (SFCL.155), aerobatics (SFCL.200) and cloud flying (SFCL.215) privileges are verified by signature in a pilot's logbook but not on the SPL itself. Pilots who hold these privileges under BGA convert to an SPL with the privileges, but they are unlikely to have the required logbook signatures in place. So, a 'logbook signature record' is supplied with new SPLs with the required detail in place. If you need an up to date 'logbook signature record' that details your privileges issued on conversion, please contact the BGA office.

Rolling Recency – this is important!

The SPL, the associated ratings and privileges and the Flight Instructor Certificate are non-expiring. They are instead subject to 'rolling recency'.

'Rolling recency' is an important principle within SFCL, including for instructors. For example, an SPL holder must have a specified minimum amount of recency in the 24 months prior to getting airborne, and a Flight Instructor (Sailplanes) must have a specified minimum amount of recency in the 36 months prior to instructing. Additional SPL privileges bring additional rolling recency requirements.

The following recency extracts from the October 2020 published SFCL rules may be helpful. Please note that this document is a guide and the published SFCL text is definitive. The SFCL text additionally includes 'Acceptable Means of Compliance' and 'Guidance Material'.

SPL recency. SFCL.160 refers.

Sailplanes, excluding TMGs SPL holders shall exercise SPL privileges, excluding TMGs, only if in the last 24 months before the planned flight they:

- Completed, on sailplanes, at least five hours of flight time as PIC or flying dual or solo under the supervision of an FI(S), including, on sailplanes, excluding TMGs, at least 15 launches; and two training flights with an FI(S);
or
- Passed a proficiency check with an FE(S) on a sailplane, excluding TMGs; the proficiency check shall be based on the skill test for SPL.

TMGs SPL holders shall exercise their TMG privileges only if in the last 24 months before the planned flight they:

- Completed at least 12 hours of flight time as PIC or flying dual or solo under the supervision of an FI(S), including, on TMGs, at least six hours flight time, 12 take-offs and landings; and a training flight of at least one-hour total flight time with an instructor;
or
- Passed a proficiency check with an examiner; the proficiency check shall be based on the skill test as specified in point SFCL.150(b)(2).

SPL holders with current privileges to fly on TMGs who also hold a licence including the privileges to fly on TMGs in accordance with the provisions of Part-FCL to Regulation (EU) No 1178/2011 are exempted from the above SPL TMG recency requirements.

The completion of the dual flights, the flights under supervision and the training flights as specified in paragraphs (a)(1) and (b)(1), as well as the proficiency checks as specified in paragraph (a)(2) and (b)(2) shall be entered in the logbook of the pilot and signed by the responsible FI(S) in the case of paragraphs (a)(1) and (b)(1), and by the responsible FE(S) in the case of paragraphs (a)(2) and (b)(2).

Carriage of passengers SPL holders shall carry passengers only if in the preceding 90 days they have carried out as PIC, at least:

- Three launches in sailplanes, excluding TMGs, if passengers are to be carried in sailplanes, excluding TMGs;
or
- Three take-offs and landings in TMGs, if passengers are to be carried in a TMG. For carrying passengers at night in a TMG, at least one of those take-offs and landings shall be carried out at night.

Launch method recency. SFCL.155 refers.

To maintain the privileges for each launching method and in accordance with the requirements, SPL holders shall complete a minimum of five launches during the last two years, except for bungee launch, in which case they shall complete only two launches. In the case of self-launch, launches may be done in self-launch or through take-offs in TMGs or a combination of these.

If SPL holders do not comply with the requirement, in order to renew their privileges, they shall perform the additional number of launches flying dual or solo under the supervision of an instructor.

Sailplane towing rating recency (with SPL TMG privileges). SFCL.205 refers

To exercise the privileges of the sailplane towing or banner towing rating, the holder of the rating shall complete a minimum of five tows during the last two years.

If a holder of the sailplane towing rating does not comply with the requirement, before resuming the exercise of his or her privileges, he or she shall complete the missing tows with or under the supervision of an instructor.

Sailplane cloud flying privileges recency. SFCL.215 refers.

SPL holders shall exercise their sailplane cloud flying privileges only if in the last two years before the planned cloud flight they have completed at least one hour of flight time, or five flights, as PIC exercising cloud flying privileges in sailplanes.

If SPL holders with sailplane cloud flying privileges do not comply with the requirements and they wish to resume the exercise of their sailplane cloud flying privileges, they shall:

- pass a proficiency check with an FE(S);
or
- perform the additional flight time or flights required in paragraph (e) with an FI(S).

SPL holders with sailplane cloud flying privileges who also hold a BIR or an IR(A) in accordance with Annex I (Part-FCL) to Regulation (EU) No 1178/2011 shall be fully credited towards the requirements.

Flight Instructor (Sailplanes) recency. SFCL.360 refers.

An FI(S) certificate holder shall only exercise the privileges of his or her certificate if before the planned exercise of those privileges he or she has within the last three years, completed:

- Instructor refresher training at an ATO, a DTO, or a competent authority during which the holder shall receive theoretical knowledge instruction for refreshing and updating the knowledge relevant for sailplane instructors;
and
- When providing flight instruction as FI(S), at least 30 hours; or 60 launches or take-offs and landings;
and
- Within the last nine years and in accordance with the procedures established for that purpose by the competent authority, demonstrated the ability to instruct on sailplanes to an FI(S) who is qualified in accordance with point SFCL.315(a)(7) and nominated by the head of training of an ATO or a DTO.

Details of how FI(S) recency requirements apply including the 9-year refresher are described at <https://members.glidering.co.uk/pilot-licence-conversion/>

The hours flown as an FE(S) during skill tests, proficiency checks and assessments of competence shall be fully credited towards the requirement.

If the FI(S) certificate holder has failed to complete the instruction flight under supervision to the satisfaction of the FI(S), he or she shall not exercise the privileges of the FI(S) certificate until he or she has successfully completed an assessment of competence in accordance with point SFCL.345.

To resume the exercise of the privileges of the FI(S) certificate, an FI(S) certificate holder who does not comply with all the requirements shall comply with the requirements of paragraph (a)(1)(i) and of point SFCL.345.

Flight Examiner (Sailplanes) certificate expires after 5 years and therefore must be revalidated or renewed. SFCL.460 refers.

An FE(S) certificate shall be valid for five years.

An FE(S) certificate shall be revalidated if its holder has:

- during the validity period of the FE(S) certificate, completed an examiner refresher course which is provided either by the competent authority or by an ATO or a DTO and approved by that competent authority, during which the holder shall receive theoretical knowledge instruction for refreshing and updating the knowledge relevant for sailplane examiners;
- within the last 24 months preceding the end of the validity period of the certificate, demonstrated the ability to conduct skill tests, proficiency checks or assessments of competence to an inspector from the competent authority or an examiner specifically authorised to do so by the competent authority that is responsible for the FE(S) certificate.

An FE(S) certificate holder who also holds one or more examiner certificates for other aircraft categories in accordance with Annex I (Part-FCL) to Regulation (EU) No 1178/2011 or with Annex III (Part-BFCL) to Regulation (EU) 2018/395 may achieve combined revalidation of all examiner certificates held, in agreement with the competent authority.

If an FE(S) certificate has expired, its holder shall comply with the requirements of paragraph (b)(1) and of point SFCL.445 before he or she can resume the exercise of the privileges of the FE(S) certificate.

An FE(S) certificate shall only be revalidated or renewed if the applicant demonstrates continued compliance with the requirements of point SFCL.410 as well as with the requirements of point SFCL.420(d) and (e).

Appendix 1 - SPL and LAPL(S) issued under FCL.

Sailplane licences issued in accordance with Part-FCL are now deemed to be issued in accordance with Part-SFCL.

This table describes the differences that apply.

	Part-FCL	Part-SFCL
II	Type of licence SPL	SPL
	LAPL(S)	SPL
IX	Validity:	no change
XII	Radiotelephony	no change
XIII	Remarks:	no change
XII	Ratings etc Sailplane towing TMG	no change
	Aerobatic Launch methods SCFR	Logbook, not licence, entries
	Instructors FCL.905.FI applies as in/ (a)/(b) (f)ST/ (f)A/ (i)/ And TMG/ (f)SCFR	SFCL.315.FI applies as in/ (a)(1)/(a)(2)/ (a)(3)/ (a)(5)AT/ (a)(5)aerobatics/ (a)(7)/ (a)(4)/ (a)(6)TMG night/ (a)(5)SCF
XII	CERTIFICATE OF REVALIDATION	not applicable
Examiners SE(S) & FE(S) certificates valid on 8 Apr 2020 are valid for 5 years.		
	Sailplanes/ powered sailplanes (a/c)	Sailplanes (excluding TMG)
	TMG (a/c)	no change
	FE(S) FCL.1005.FE applies as in (d)(1)	SFCL.415(a)
	(d)(2)	No equivalent in Part-SFCL
	(d)(3)	SFCL.415(b)
	(d)(4)	included within SFCL.415(a)
	FIE(S) FCL.105.FIE(c) applies	SFCL.415(c)