

SPL – what, when and how?

This presentation is a guide
(always refer to UK SFCL for the detail)

Sailplane Flight Crew Licensing (SFCL)?

SFCL is UK law. From 30th September 2025, a Sailplane Pilot Licence (SPL) will be required to fly a Part 21 sailplane (student pilots excepted).

Meanwhile, glider pilots in the UK are operating under BGA requirements. Those who have chosen to utilise SPL privileges (eg to fly a TMG) are supported by the BGA.

The BGA carries out the conversion from BGA gliding qualifications to the SPL on behalf of the CAA, who issue the licence and collect a fee paid by the applicant.

UK SFCL construct

(UK SFCL currently mirrors EASA SFCL)

Rule (law that can only be modified via Parliament)

SFCL.155 SPL Launching methods

Acceptable Means of Compliance (law that can be modified by the CAA)

AMC1 SFCL.155(a)(2) SPL – Launching methods

Guidance (guidance that may be modified by the CAA)

GM1 SFCL.155(a)(4) SPL – Launching methods

Where can I find the SFCL rules, AMC and GM?

Linked from BGA members website 'Laws and Rules'

<https://members.gliding.co.uk/laws-rules/>

or

direct to the CAA's 'Sailplane rulebook'

https://regulatorylibrary.caa.co.uk/2018-1976/Content/Sailplanes_1.htm

Top tip: Don't try to remember the detail. If unsure, please check SFCL. Once used to the layout, SFCL is surprisingly user-friendly.

Licence structure 1 of 2 (summarised)

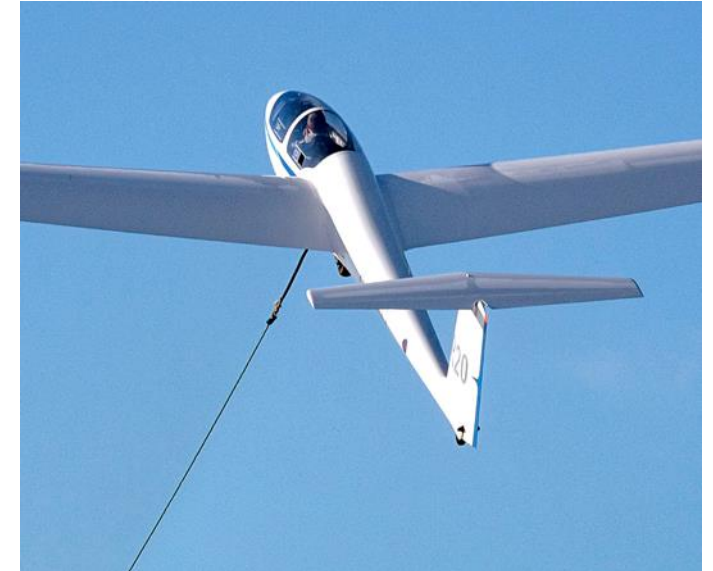
Single licence – the Sailplane Pilot Licence (SPL)

Minimum medical requirement for all privileges is the CAA Pilot Medical Declaration

Passenger carrying subject to experience (eg 10hrs pilot in command)

Self-launch, cloud flying, aerobatics, TMG, sailplane towing in a TMG, instructing, and examining privileges

Non-expiring subject to ‘rolling recency’



Licence structure 2 (summarised)

Flight Instructor (Sailplanes) ie 'FI(S)'

- Non-expiring subject to 'rolling recency'
- Must hold a valid SPL with the privileges being taught

Flight Examiner (Sailplanes) ie 'FE(S)'

- 5-year expiry with renewal requirements
- Privileges increase with experience (subject to assessment)
- Must hold valid SPL and FI(S) privileges




Rolling recency?

Licence holder responsibility

Recency requirements vary from privilege to privilege.

‘Falling out of recency’ usually requires making up the missing experience with an instructor or supervised by an instructor.



Have I met the recency requirements needed for the flight I'm planning to do?

Rolling recency – SPL holders 1 of 2 (summarised)

SPL

In the 24 months prior to the flight:

- 5 hours including 15 launches, and two training flights with an FI(S)
- or pass a proficiency test with an examiner

Various additional privileges have rolling recency requirements...

Rolling recency – SPL holders 2 (summarised)

Winch, self-launch, aerotow

In the 24 months prior to the flight:

- 5 launches of the required type PIC, or with an instructor or supervised by an instructor

(Self-launch can include TMG take-offs)

Bungee

In the 24 months prior to the flight:

- 2 launches PIC, or with an instructor or supervised by an instructor)

TMG privileges

In the 24 months prior to the flight:

- 12 hours, including in TMGs 6 hours, 12 landings and a 1-hour TMG training flight
- or pass a proficiency test with an examiner

Rolling recency real world example

SPL holder wants to take an aerotow as pilot in command.

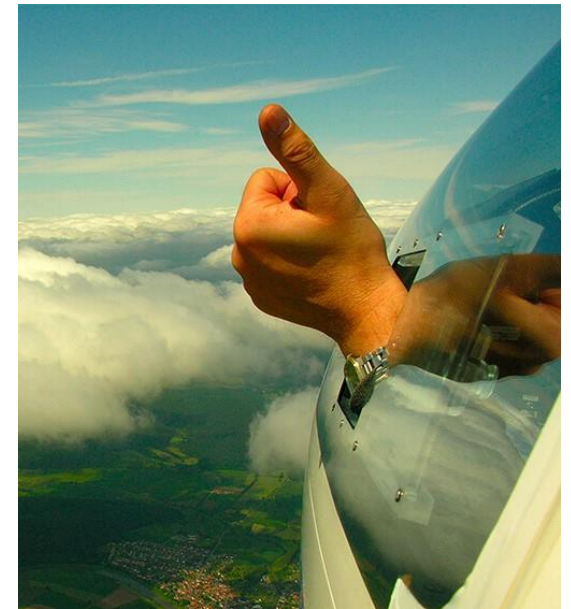
‘In the past 24 months, have I flown 5 hours + 15 launches (of any type) and 2 training flights with an instructor?’

Yes

‘And in the past 24 months have I flown 5 *aerotow* launches?’

No – only 4

Recency solution: take an aerotow with an FI(S) or, if the FI(S) thinks it appropriate, solo supervised by an FI(S)



Rolling recency – instructors (summarised)

The FI(S) certificate is non-expiring and subject to rolling recency, i.e:

In the previous 3 years;

1. 30hrs or 60 launches instructing

and

2. a refresher seminar

and

in the previous 9 years;

3. a demonstration of competence (DofC)



Instructor recency 9-year DofC?

What? Every 9 years demonstrate instructing competence to an FI(S) with FIC privileges.

When? Within 9 years of completing the instructor course or within 9 years of the last BGA 5-year refresher (for now)

How record? Please **make sure** the BGA 5-year refresher (for now) or 9-year DoC is noted and signed in your logbook

Notes:

The BGA 5-year refresher disappears from September 2025

As ever, CFIs can of course introduce additional standardisation activity. Revised BGA guidance will appear during 2025.



Licence conversion - requirements? (summarised)

Bronze + Cross Country Endorsement = SPL standard

So, pilots with Bronze + Cross Country Endorsement* may convert to SPL (*or Silver distance for those who predate the XC endorsement!)

Additional BGA endorsements = SPL additional privileges

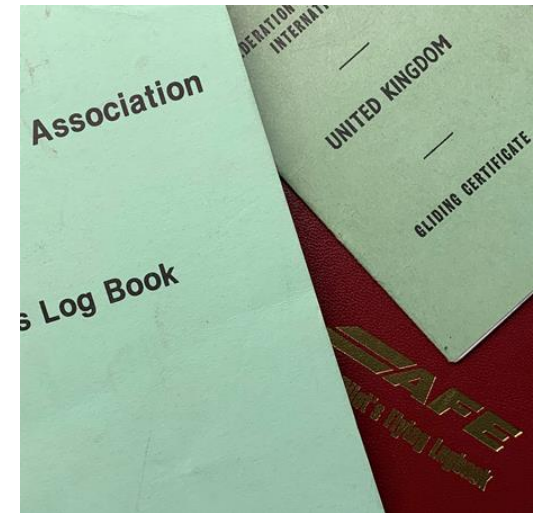
On application, equivalent privileges can be included on the SPL

SLMG = SPL TMG privileges

Pilots holding a valid SLMG class rating can apply to include TMG (and self-launch) on the SPL

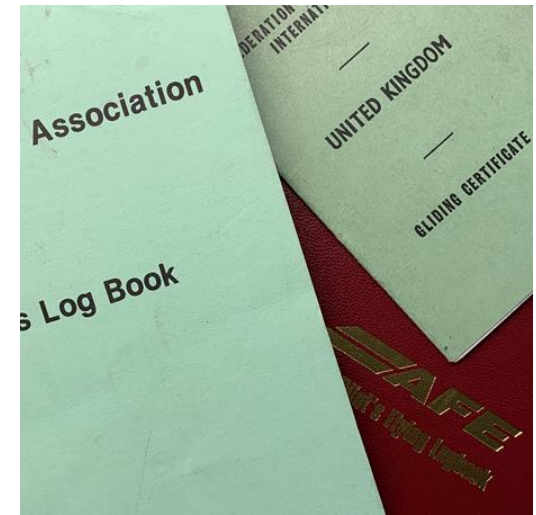
BGA assistant or full rated instructor = FI(S) standard

Where a BGA full or assistant rating is held, on application an FI(S) certificate can be included on the SPL



Licence conversion - application process

- Download the BGA form with guidance
- Read the guidance. Think about the detail.
- Complete the form & send it to the BGA
- BGA checks & makes recommendation to CAA
- CAA issues the SPL
- BGA checks the SPL and privileges are correct
- You receive your SPL – no more CAA involvement



It's all at <https://members.gliding.co.uk/pilot-licence-conversion/>

Licence conversion - advice

Pilots - qualify asap to convert to SPL

If you are a BI, wait until May – see *‘possible developments’*

New assistant instructor? Complete your post course review before applying.

Unable to meet the conversion requirement by 30th Sep 25? Carry on as a student pilot. Recorded training under BGA (record card + logbook) is valid & recognised. Keep it neat and tidy 😊

Use the PMD (needs a CAA portal login). Guidance available here:
<https://members.gliding.co.uk/medical-2/pilot-medical-declaration/>

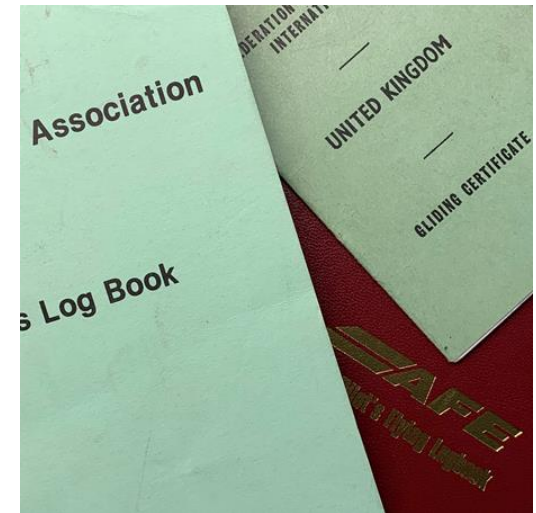


Licence conversion – commitment?

Once you have an SPL, you don't need to use the privileges – **the BGA certificate, etc can be used until 30th September 2025**

If you do choose to use SPL privileges (e.g. for flying a TMG), you must fully comply with SFCL and the medical requirements

Note: FI(S) privileges may only be used within a DTO



What about the BI rating?

Existing BI's automatically hold BGA IFP privileges (i.e. an assured and insured qualification).

Meanwhile, BI's can continue as BI's until the 30th September 2025.

Note: There may be more good news for BIs.
Please consider our '*possible developments*' slide!



What about the BGA MGIR?

The BGA MGIR provides a framework for legally and safely teaching gliding exercises in motor gliders.

The BGA MGIR continues to apply at BGA clubs until full implementation of SFCL by 30th September 2025.

To continue to effectively manage the risk under SFCL, where 'MGIR'-like privileges exist for FI(S)s who have SPL TMG privileges, appropriate guidance will be provided to CFIs and those FI(S)s.



Solo but no SPL by September 2025?

Pilots who do not hold an SPL are ‘student pilots’.

Formal authorisation and supervision is required for student pilots:

SFCL.125 SPL – A student pilot shall not fly solo unless authorised to do so and supervised by an FI(S).

Current UK law states: *‘Medical declaration’ means made in accordance with article...by pilot holding a sailplane pilot licence (SPL)...*

Note: Please refer to our *‘possible developments’* slide.



What about SFCL pilot training?

SFCL training needs to take place under what are called Declared Training Organisation (DTO) rules.

DTO rules define the training content and ensure the training is properly organised (under the CFI).

New pilots will train for an SPL as they do now, ie learn, fly solo, learn more inc navigation and out-landings, and complete a theory and flying test.

Pilots who start training before the changeover to DTO will have their recorded 'BGA' training credited to the SPL training course.

BGA Training Progress Card

This card provides a working breakdown of the exercises described in the BGA gliding syllabus.

Name.....Email.....

Exercise	Brief	Demo	Atter	
	Name	Date	Name	C i
Pre-flight 'walkaround' check				
1. Pre-Flight Checks				
2. Lookout				
3. Effects of controls:				
a) Elevator				
b) 1st stall				
c) Speed control				
d) Ailerons				
e) Rudder				
f) Flap (where applicable)				
4. Aileron drag				
5. Aileron/Rudder Coordination				
6. Turning				

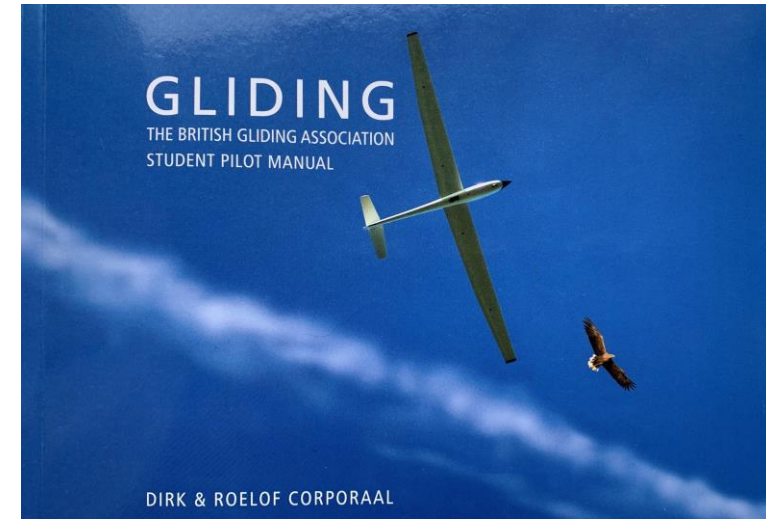
DTO development

Developing courses (including syllabus) and getting them CAA-approved


Developed **new student pilot manual**

Club **DTO manual etc ready to go**

Talking to clubs about DTO **paused**



3021



**DECLARED TRAINING ORGANISATION
MANUAL**

CAA APPROVAL REF. XXXXXX
COPYRIGHT 2021

Club Name

DTO Reference number

Ver June 2021

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INTRODUCTION

This Declared Training Organisation (DTO) manual

- describes the DTO requirements, roles and responsibilities
- provides additional guidance to instructors and student pilots
- must be used by all club instructors and student pilots as used within the DTO.

REQUIREMENTS

General
The DTO is established to support theoretical knowledge and Flight Crew Licensing (SFCL) rules, acceptable means of compliance.

The DTO has been declared as compliant with Annex VIII Part-I and guidance material. The following requirements and guidance maintaining compliance.

Roles and Responsibilities
The DTO representative is the club Chairman / Manager / Chief responsible and authorised as detailed at DTO.GEN.210(a)(1).

The DTO Head of Training is the club Chief Flying Instructor, with at least training compliance and the supervision of the DTO.GEN.210(a)(2) and AMC1 DTO.GEN.210(a)(2).

Safety
The DTO utilises and complies with the BGA Safety Management system at <https://members.glding.co.uk>. The DTO will address mandated by the CAA, including those relating to airworthiness

Adding a privilege after SPL issue (only during the conversion period i.e. until 30th September 2025)

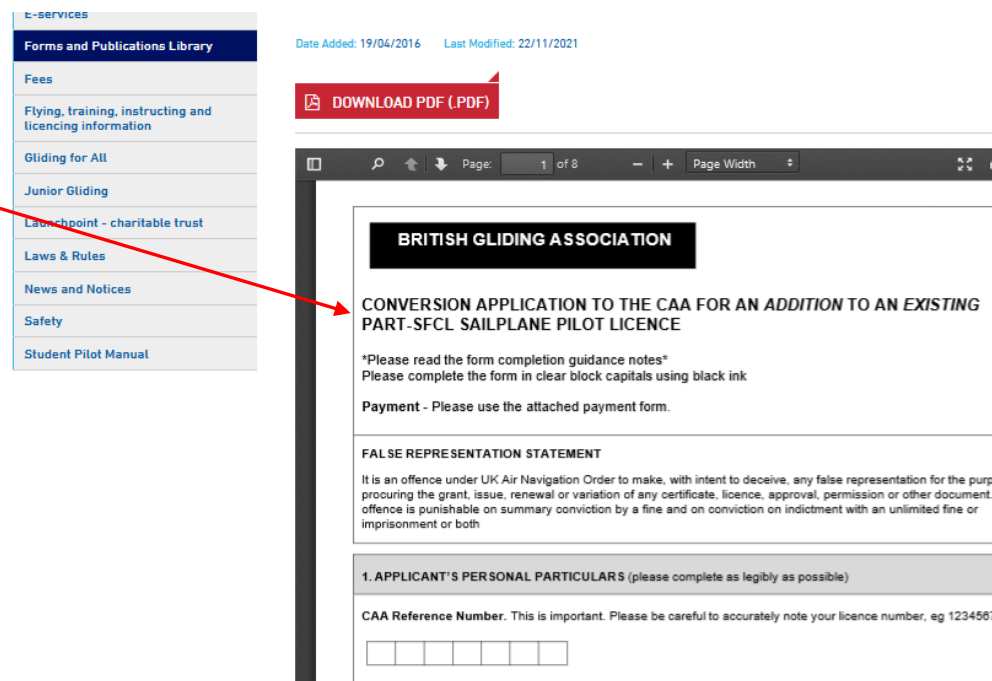
Satisfy the conversion or SFCL training requirement

Complete the paperwork

Submit to BGA for checking

BGA submits a recommendation to CAA

New privilege is issued



The screenshot shows a web interface for the British Gliding Association. On the left is a navigation menu titled 'e-services' with the following items: 'Forms and Publications Library' (highlighted), 'Fees', 'Flying, training, instructing and licencing information', 'Gliding for All', 'Junior Gliding', 'Launchpoint - charitable trust', 'Laws & Rules', 'News and Notices', 'Safety', and 'Student Pilot Manual'. To the right of the menu, there is a 'Date Added: 19/04/2016' and 'Last Modified: 22/11/2021'. Below this is a red button that says 'DOWNLOAD PDF (.PDF)'. The main content area displays a PDF form with the following text:

BRITISH GLIDING ASSOCIATION

CONVERSION APPLICATION TO THE CAA FOR AN ADDITION TO AN EXISTING PART-SFCL SAILPLANE PILOT LICENCE

Please read the form completion guidance notes
Please complete the form in clear block capitals using black ink

Payment - Please use the attached payment form.

FALSE REPRESENTATION STATEMENT

It is an offence under UK Air Navigation Order to make, with intent to deceive, any false representation for the purpose of procuring the grant, issue, renewal or variation of any certificate, licence, approval, permission or other document. This offence is punishable on summary conviction by a fine and on conviction on indictment with an unlimited fine or imprisonment or both.

1. APPLICANT'S PERSONAL PARTICULARS (please complete as legibly as possible)

CAA Reference Number. This is important. Please be careful to accurately note your licence number, eg 12345678

My licence & privileges were issued pre-SFCL..

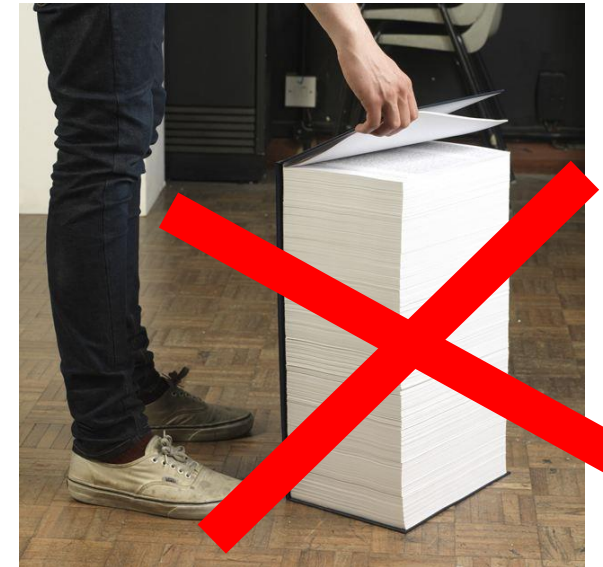
FCL LAPL(S) and SPL issued under FCL deemed to be a UK SFCL SPL

(Article 3b of the SFCL regulation)

Follow the SFCL requirements - ignore the previously applicable FCL requirements

No other action required

E.g. FI(S) can ignore legacy expiry date – rolling recency applies



Recap - BGA certified pilot v SPL pilot?

BGA certified pilot (until Sept 2025)	SPL holder (required from Sept 2025)
Follow BGA currency guidance	Comply with SFCL recency requirement
Comply with BGA medical requirements	Comply with Part-MED requirements or pilot medical declaration
Comply with Sailplane Air Operations rules	Comply with Sailplane Air Operations rules
Follow club rules	Follow club rules

Recap - Club pilot training now v as a DTO?

Club pilot training now	Club DTO training
Follow the (BGA) requirements	Follow the (DTO) requirements
Supported by BGA inc SRE's etc	Supported by BGA inc SRE's etc
CFI manages the club instructor team	CFI manages the club instructor team
Bronze flying test by Full Rated Instructor	SPL flying test by Flight Examiner
BGA syllabus's etc supplied by BGA	SFCL syllabus's etc supplied by BGA
Occurrences reported to the MOR system via BGA	Occurrences reported to the MOR system via BGA
Pre-Bronze & XC endorsed solo pilots informally supervised	Pre-SPL qualified solo pilots formally supervised

Possible developments...1

CAA project - *“Need to make recreational aviation licences attractive”*

Consultations followed. Good level of response from gliding.

CAA proposals for SFCL changes align with inputs from glider pilots, e.g:

- Include a BI rating
- Simpler access to aerobatic instructing
- Continue with the existing BGA theoretical knowledge examination system
- Remove the requirement for a towing rating (from SFCL and FCL)
- Remove the DTO requirement

Why ‘possible development’? Many of the changes must be approved via Parliament. Hopefully, that can occur in late spring 2025.

Possible developments...2

CAA consultation on the Pilot Medical Declaration (PMD).

Good level of response from gliding.

CAA proposals for PMD include permitting student pilots to fly as PIC using a PMD.

Why 'possible development'? The change must be approved via Parliament. Hopefully, that can occur in late spring 2025.

Finally...

If you haven't got an SPL, **please apply soon.**

Please encourage others to apply asap.

<https://members.gliding.co.uk/pilot-licence-conversion/>

If you're an assistant or full rated instructor, consider booking onto a BGA-run FI(S) refresher seminar. Details are at:

[Events Archive - Pilot & Club Info](#)