

EASA Part BFCL

Update for EBF, Oct 2019



Definitions

- Part FCL

EASA Flight Crew Licensing: the original law from 2015 which covered all general aviation, not just balloons. It has major disadvantages many national licensing, notably complexity and medical requirements

- Part BFCL

EASA Balloon Flight Crew Licensing: the new lighter rules, developed by EASA together with the European Ballooning Federation. It is a much better solution than Part FCL, though still has some disadvantages compared to national licences, notably needing at least a LAPL medical.



Definitions

- DTO

Declared Training Organisation

- CPB

Commercial Passenger Ballooning

- Part BOP

EASA Balloon Operations rules, in force since April 2019



Timelines

- Current opt-out of Part FCL ends 8 April 2020.
 - Some EASA members adopted Part FCL, most did not
 - Therefore two transition processes:
 - FCL to BFCL (defined already)
 - National to BFCL (needs work by NAAs)



Timelines

- Timeline for Part BFCL

Final vote at EASA 24th October 2019 was positive

Part BFCL expected into law (OJ EU) in January

AMC/GM in final stages and expected early 2020

BFCL licences can be issued from 9 April 2020

National licences are valid until 8 April 2021 (end of the licensing transition period)

Medicals expiring in the licensing transition period must be replaced by EASA compliant medical ahead of licence conversion if necessary



Part BFCL – one licence with ratings

BPL (Balloon Pilot Licence)

Base licence with 4 classes (hot air, gas, mixed, hot air airship)

Groups by size (hot air only) for all flying

Commercial rating

Tether rating

Night rating

No restriction on number on board (Part BFCL)

Cost sharing up to 4 on board (Part BOP)



Part BFCL – medical requirements

BPL (Balloon Pilot Licence)

For Commercial Passenger Ballooning:

EU Class 2 medical (or higher)

For all other flying** :

Light Aircraft Pilot Licence (LAPL) medical (or higher)

** except:

Commercial non-CPB with more than 4 on board needs Class 2, but such flights are extremely rare

For ICAO compliance / validity worldwide:

EU Class 2 medical (or higher)



Age 70

- Remains in place, no Commercial Passenger Ballooning after age 70
 - Parallel work by EBF to challenge this restriction



BFCL Implementation

- Transition report from National Licences to BFCL Licence to be worked out by each NAA, below is an example of what it might look like
 - Pilots will need instructor flight or examiner flight in the largest group to be held on the new licence
 - Pilots will need recency (with 2/4 years preceding BPL application) for base licence and for each privilege (class, group, tether) they want to transition
 - For night rating, sufficient experience (ever) is required
 - Instructors will need to be current per BFCL requirements



BFCL Implementation

- Transition report from FCL to BFCL is already written as follows:

Existing pilot licences and national medical certificates

1. Part-FCL licences for balloons and associated privileges, ratings and certificates issued by a Member State before the date of application of this Regulation shall be deemed to have been issued in accordance with this Regulation. Member States shall replace those licences with licences that comply with the format laid down in Annex VI (Part-ARA) to Regulation (EU) No 1178/2011 when they reissue licences for administrative reasons or upon a request of licence holders.
2. When a Member State reissues licences and associated privileges, ratings and certificates in accordance with paragraph 1 of this Article, the Member State shall, as applicable:
 - (a) transfer all privileges already endorsed in Part-FCL licences to the new licence format;
 - (b) convert the privileges for tethered flight or commercial operation associated with a Part-FCL licence into a tethered flight rating or a commercial operation rating in accordance with the provisions of Point BFCL.200 and BFCL.215 of Annex III (Part-BFCL) to this Regulation;
 - (c) endorse the expiry date of a flight instructor certificate associated with a Part-FCL licence into the pilot's logbook or issue an equivalent document. After that date, those pilots shall exercise instructor privileges only if they comply with point BFCL.360 of Annex III (Part-BFCL) to this Regulation.



BPL training requirements (under DTO)

- 9 theory papers (can be grouped into 6 under AMC)
 - Common papers (with other GA)
 - Airlaw / human performance / met / communications
 - Balloon navigation
 - Balloon specific (4 small papers) [AMC will make this one large paper]
- 16 hours **in group A**
 - 12 hours minimum dual instruction
 - 10 inflations, 20 take-off & landing
 - 1 solo at least 30 minutes
 - (can interpret that progress checks etc. can make up the balance between 12.5 and 16 hours)



BPL extensions

- to gas / hot air airship
 - 5 flights (gas) / 5 hours (hot air airship)
 - Under DTO
 - Skill test including oral theory examination
 - No additional written paper
- to larger groups
 - Prior experience needed:
B (100 hrs PIC), C (200 hrs PIC), D (300 hrs PIC)
 - 2 instruction flights on group
 - Not via DTO, though instructors need DTO



BPL extensions

- Tether rating
 - 2 instructional tethers
 - No DTO needed when done independently of main licence
 - Would normally expect to be done along with main licence under DTO
- Night rating
 - 2 instructional night flights at least one hour
 - Not via DTO, though instructors need DTO



BPL extensions

- Commercial operation rating
 - PIC experience more than 50 hours and 50 flights
 - 18 or older
 - Class specific skill test
 - Group controlled by initial skill test then ongoing proficiency check or instructional flight : Group used for last test/check/training flight or smaller
 - Not via DTO, though instructors need DTO



BPL recency (non-commercial)

- Base licence
 - 6 hours / 10 flights in 24 months
 - 1 training flight in 48 months
- Additional class rating(s)
 - 3 hours in 24 months
- Control of groups
 - Group used for training flight, or smaller
- Tether rating
 - 1 tether in 48 months
- Night rating
 - No requirement



BPL recency (commercial)

- Commercial rating used for commercial non-CPB
 - No requirement
- Commercial rating used for CPB
 - Within last 180 days: 3 flights in balloons, at least 1 on class (or 1 training flight on class)
 - Within last 24 months: Proficiency check on class OR refresher course at DTO including 1 training flight on class
 - CPB limited to group used in proficiency check / training flight, or smaller group
 - Proficiency check covers both Part BFCL and Part BOP



Balloon Flight Instructors FI(B)

- Can train for all ratings and privileges held by FI(B)
 - Can train instructors once done 50 hrs instructing and 1 hr supervised training instructors
 - Specific instructor training for night flying instruction and instruction of trainee instructors



Balloon Flight Instructors FI(B)

- To get FI(B)
 - 18 or older
 - 75 hours PIC (15 on class)
 - Training course at DTO
 - 25 hours on “how to instruct”
 - 12 hrs on theory (refresh and expand theoretical knowledge)
 - 3 hours with 3 flights of flight training
 - Assessment of Competence flight with Balloon Flight Examiner FE(B)



Instructors – maintaining rating

- Unlimited validity
 - ***No longer any need to periodically renew / pay but have to maintain by recency as follows***
- To exercise privileges:
 - 6 hours instruction within last 3 years
 - For examiners: skill tests, prof. checks and assessments of competence can be counted towards the 6 hours for their FI(B)
 - One refresher course at DTO within last 3 years
 - No mandated flying element to refresher course
 - Within last 9 years have done one instructional flight under supervision



Examiners

- Vested interest limit 50% (means an examiner can examine a student for whom they have done 50% maximum of the training)
 - ***Raised from 25%***

- For BPL and class extensions:
 - 250 hours PIC including 50 hours as FI(B) covering full BPL syllabus.
 - Standardisation course
 - Includes at least one skill test / prof. check / AoC
 - Assessment of competence
 - Good background and character



Examiners

- For commercial operation tests and checks:
 - Hold rating
 - Specific training during a standardisation course
- For FI(B) assessment of competence:
 - 350 hrs PIC & 5hrs training instructors
 - Specific training during a standardisation course

Note: have simplified structure away from multiple examiner ratings and enabled examiners to examine for ratings and privileges they personally hold, with specific extra training (one off) for examining for the commercial rating and for examining instructors



Examiners – maintaining certificate

- 5 years validity
 - ***Performance based recency as follows:***
- Revalidation requirements:
 - 1 skill test, prof. check or AoC within final 24 months of validity period supervised by NAA appointed inspector or senior examiner
 - Examiner refresher course

Note: this is branded as performance based regulation in that an examiner who does nothing else in five years will very likely not pass the supervised check.

Note: examiners still have to maintain themselves as instructors

