

4th September 2019



LAA and CAA Collaborate To Allow Yak Aircraft To Operate On LAA Permits to Fly.

Owners of YAK-18A, YAK-50, YAK-52 and Nanchang CJ-6 aircraft in the UK will in future have the opportunity to operate their aircraft under LAA oversight, in agreement with the CAA.

The radial-engined training and aerobatic aircraft are currently operated on Permits to Fly overseen by the CAA, but this is becoming less desirable due to the increasing cost to all parties of overseeing a diminishing fleet, while approved parts supplies are now becoming harder to find due to a lack of manufacturer type support.

The LAA believes it has, via its A8-26 delegated authority and design approvals, the proven expertise and capability to take over this oversight. The LAA 'Mods' review process is well-proven and would offer a cost-effective route for the provision on a number of safety enhancements such as undercarriage retract warning systems and angle-of-attack indicators, which would mitigate a significant number of accident sources currently noted within the fleet.

As it is noted that there are some differences from Western engineering practices, such as the use of compressed air systems and there is a strong UK-based engineering community with known experience of the YAK/Nanchang fleet, the LAA does not envisage any wholesale change in maintenance programmes or in the roles of those currently carrying out the work.

Given the specialised knowledge of the engineering operations involved, the move to LAA Permits would require existing maintenance programmes and the nomination of approved engineers to continue to carry out this work. The LAA will also work with the YAK maintainers and the CAA to develop longer-term initiatives such as electronic g-loading recording, to better define airframe usage and develop programmes for potential extension of future airframe lives.

On display at the 2019 LAA Rally where the CAA announcement was made, YAK-52 G-YAKX, will become the first of an expected 50 aircraft to transition to LAA oversight. This 1991-built aircraft, based at Popham will act as the 'proof of concept' aircraft for the rest of the fleet.

A meeting of YAK owners, maintainers and stakeholders has been scheduled at LAA HQ, Turweston on Saturday 12 October to discuss future transition arrangements. Anyone wishing to attend should contact engineering@laa.uk.com for further information.