

ACCIDENT REPORTING

AAIB 24hr Accident Reporting Line 01252 512299
See Quick Reference Check List at the end of this Information

What is a Reportable Accident ?

A Reportable Accident is any aircraft accident where a person suffers a fatal or serious injury, or where the aircraft sustains damage or structural failure (except engine failure or damage limited to the engine, its cowlings or accessories, propellers, wing tips, antennas, tyres, brakes, fairings, or small dents and punctures in the aircraft skin).

Except for urgent reasons of safety or to minimise further damage the aircraft should not be moved from the scene of the accident or disturbed until permission to do so has been gained from the AAIB.

Reporting an Accident

The legal responsibility for notification of a Reportable Accident rests with the commander of the aircraft or, if he be killed or incapacitated, then the operator or other responsible person. If the accident occurs on or adjacent to an aerodrome, then the aerodrome authority is also required to notify the accident. A call should be made immediately following an accident to the AAIB, using the contact number at the head of this information. The person reporting the accident to the AAIB is also required to inform the local police of the accident and the place where it occurred. It is not necessary to report an accident to the CAA.

What Happens Next

The AAIB will ask for details about the aircraft, the persons involved and the nature and circumstances of the accident. For accidents initially judged by the AAIB to be relatively non-serious the AAIB will send a form to the pilot in order to collect further information, and will follow this up with further inquiries if needed. For accidents judged to be more serious, and nearly always when there are serious injuries, the AAIB will task an AAIB Inspector to investigate and probably visit the scene. Some accidents which might at first seem minor may nevertheless be investigated in more detail if the AAIB perceive that there may be a safety benefit in doing so, for example to deal with a technical failure which if not remedied may have the potential to cause a more serious accident to another of the same type in the future.

On completion of all inquiries and investigations the AAIB will publish their report. This can be between a few months to even a couple of years after the event. All published reports can be found on the AAIB's website.

Insurance

As soon as possible after the event it is important for the insured to inform their insurance provider of any accident that may result in a claim on a policy.

Telling the LAA

There is no legal requirement to inform the LAA of an accident and normally there is no advantage in doing so (we are usually quickly advised directly by the AAIB in any case). However, when the possible cause or contributory cause of an accident is thought to be a technical or mechanical failure then a call is appreciated, especially if there may be safety implications for other operators of similar aircraft on which we may act. The LAA routinely assists the AAIB in their accident investigations.

On hearing about an accident the LAA will normally, as a matter of course, provide a copy of this Technical Leaflet directly to the owner.

Whatever the cause of the accident, the LAA always do appreciate being sent newspaper cuttings etc relating to an accident to a LAA aircraft. These are useful in keeping LAA staff abreast of events and make useful additions to the LAA archives. Sometimes the media will display a poor understanding of aviation matters, leading to an unjustifiably poor image being portrayed about aircraft safety and aviation in general. It may be that the LAA would offer comment to the media to correct such misinformation.

The LAA also welcome receiving photographs (either conventional or digital) relating to an aircraft accident, particularly those taken at the scene. Such photographs will help LAA staff in the understanding of subsequent damage and repair reports and may be used for LAA safety education initiatives, magazine articles etc. (E-mail to engineering@laa.uk.com).

Validity of the Permit to Fly

A number of Conditions predicate the validity of a Permit to Fly. Inter alia, these state that the aircraft must be maintained in an airworthy condition and that a Permit Maintenance Release (PMR) is issued (by a LAA inspector) following maintenance or repair. Following an accident, an aircraft's Permit to Fly is therefore invalid until such time as the aircraft is properly repaired in accordance with LAA procedures and the work signed off by a LAA inspector.

Long-term Storage, Selling or Disposing of the Aircraft

If the aircraft becomes subject to long term storage in anticipation of possible future repair or is to be broken for spares, please inform the LAA so that records may be updated. In the event that the damaged aircraft is sold, broken for spares or permanently destroyed then the registration should be cancelled by informing the CAA Registration Department (020 74536666).

Repair Procedure

As a general rule, minor repairs and repairs made 100% by replacement may be overseen by a LAA inspector and no contact with LAA Engineering is necessary. Naturally, good aeronautical engineering practise must be followed and designer/manufacturers requirements satisfied. Proper worksheet and log book records must be made, and the work must be properly signed off by a LAA inspector (signing a PMR). Details should then be provided to the LAA at the next Permit renewal application. However, major and structural repairs must be approved by the LAA prior to commencement, and accordingly a repair scheme proposal should be submitted to LAA Engineering. This includes repairs being carried out by an original kit manufacturer or other professional repairer. Be prepared to accept that a badly damaged aircraft may simply be beyond practical repair. Apart from being often technically difficult and always costly, there is a chance that further damage will be discovered at a latter stage, meaning early repair work and expense can be wasted. Repairs will add weight, which can be a showstopper for some microlight aircraft.

See Technical Leaflets TL 3.05 and TL 3.13 on the LAA website for full information on repair procedures.

AAIB Contact Details

Air Accident Investigation Branch – Contact details:

Farnborough House
Berkshire Copse Road
Aldershot
Hants
GU11 2HH

Accident Line: 01252 512299. Information Line: 01252 510300
AAIB Website: www.aaib.gov.uk

The AAIB is an independent part of the Department for Transport. It is not part of the CAA.

QUICK REFERENCE CHECK LIST

Report accident to AAIB (01252 512299) and determine permission to move
Report to local police
Make aircraft safe (mags off, master switch off, fuel off, fire extinguisher close by)
Reassure passengers and advise destination airfield if becoming overdue
Report to owner of aircraft/airfield/strip
Report to insurance provider
Tell the LAA if appropriate, see above
Secure and weatherproof aircraft
Locate, check and compile aircraft documents