



**AUSTRALIAN SENATE**

**STANDING COMMITTEES ON RURAL AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS AND TRANSPORT  
LEGISLATION COMMITTEE**

24 November 2020

Mr Shane Carmody  
Chief Executive Officer  
Civil Aviation Safety Authority

Via email:

Dear Mr Carmody

***Exemption for Operator Proficiency Checks***

I write to you on behalf of the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee (the committee), to bring to your attention concerns raised with members of the committee around the requirements for helicopter Operator Proficiency Checks in CASR Part 61.

The committee understands that the requirement that helicopter aerial work Operator Proficiency Checks be conducted by a rotary aerial application examiner is causing cost and logistical problems within the industry as there are only two examiners in Australia qualified to undertake these checks.

Specifically, the committee received correspondence detailing the following concerns:

The suggestion of using the 61.040 approval process (which CASA has previously advised is no longer available) will only address part of the problem (ie for fire operations – not agricultural) and the key issue is that a 61.040 approval still won't address the longer term issue that there are only two examiners in the country for aerial application / ag approvals who are able to offer OPCs and other work on a commercial basis to ANY pilot.

Consequently, the route chosen by CASA is indirect, of questionable efficacy, complex – and does not address the key issue – that all Chief Pilots should be able to conduct OPCs for their staff – as they have safely done under Part 137 since 2007. It must be noted that CASA has already agreed to do this in a policy sense – they just haven't got organised to engage with industry and deliver the long overdue Part 137 rewrite.

The committee would be grateful if you could respond to the concerns raised above.

If you have any questions concerning this request, please contact me on 02 6277 3511.

Yours sincerely,

**Mr Gerry McNally**  
**Secretary**



**Australian Government**  
**Civil Aviation Safety Authority**

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

CASA Ref: G120/1077

11 December 2020

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Dear Mr McInally

**Exemption for Operator Proficiency Checks**

Thank you for your letter of 24 November 2020 regarding concerns raised by the Committee in relation to the requirements for helicopter Operator Proficiency Checks (OPC) in *Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998* (CASR) Part 61 – Flight Crew Licensing.

The assertion that there are currently only two examiners in Australia qualified to undertake helicopter operator proficiency checks is incorrect. Currently there are 14 flight examiners qualified to perform helicopter aerial application rating flight tests and proficiency checks, of which seven hold current flight examiner ratings. Additionally, there are a further 33 non-examiner holders of CASR 61.040 approvals who are approved to conduct helicopter OPCs, mainly for the purpose of checking fire-fighting pilots.

The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) routinely grants approvals under CASR 61.040 to helicopter pilots (including Chief Pilots) to conduct aerial application rating proficiency checks. Between August 2020 and November 2020, 28 such approvals were renewed, and a further two approvals were granted. CASA is satisfied that the number of pilots now holding approvals to perform OPC activities will be sufficient to meet the expected level of demand over the forthcoming period.

Consultation on an amendment to CASR Part 137 – Aerial Application Operations is planned to be undertaken in 2021. It is anticipated this amendment will extend CASR Part 137 to incorporate helicopter operations, and that existing provisions permitting a Chief Pilot to conduct OPCs for their staff would become available to future CASR Part 137 helicopter operators at that time.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Shane Carmody  
Chief Executive Officer and  
Director of Aviation Safety