

An Airline Pilot's Guide to the single-pilot Instrument Rating

By LAA Pilot Coaching Scheme Chairman, Jon Cooke



Since there are moves afoot to permit operation of LAA aircraft under Instrument Flight Rules (IFR), I thought it would be worthwhile providing some additional information about the single-pilot Instrument Rating. A recent article in *Light Aviation* discussed the new Competency Based Instrument Rating for Private Pilot's Licence (PPL) holders as an accessible way to obtain an Instrument Rating (IR). But, since a significant number of LAA pilots also fly heavy metal, what about those of us who hold a multi-pilot IR?

Well, if you're flying commercially you will have already converted to the new EASA licence (or will soon as your JAR-FCL licence expires). You will have no doubt realised that your old embedded Instrument Meteorological Conditions (IMC) privileges are 'no more' under EASA. If you have converted from a UK CPL/ATPL, the CAA should have included an IR(Restricted) rating valid for 25 months from the date you converted to an EASA licence. However, if you held a JAR-FCL CPL/ATPL and have converted, you will see that no IMC privileges have carried across for single-pilot aeroplanes (SPA) with an absence of an IR(Restricted).

“As the holder of a valid IR-SPA-ME, your privileges cascade down”

There are a few options available for those of us who might wish to fly IFR on our days off from flying multi-pilot aeroplanes. The old IMC rating is now renamed the Instrument Rating (Restricted) for the purpose of EASA licences; this has the same privileges as an IMC rating and is revalidated in the same way as the national IMC rating.

A pilot can hold both a full Instrument Rating and an IR(Restricted). The obvious option is to just revalidate/renew your IMC/IR(R) rating on a 25 monthly basis for single-pilot operations. This has the associated cost attached of aircraft rental, airfield approach fees and examiner fees. The other downside

with the IR(Restricted) rating is that you are not permitted access to airways on your days off. So what are the other options?

Well, the good news is that EASA has copied across the cross-crediting available under JAR-FCL. If you hold a current multi-pilot Instrument Rating then cross-crediting is available, reducing the content of the Single-Pilot Aeroplane Instrument Rating (IR-SPA) revalidation proficiency check, to the extent that if you have a current Multi-Pilot Aeroplane Instrument Rating (IR-MPA), and a current Instrument Rating valid for single-pilot aeroplane and Single Engine (IR-SPA-SE), you can revalidate the IR-SPA-SE by experience only. Interested? Read on...

Cross-crediting is available for both the ME IR and SE IR, providing the single-pilot aeroplane IR part of the rating is valid. Therefore, in the initial instance, you will need to complete a full ME IR or SE IR proficiency check to renew these privileges. Thereafter, you can use cross-crediting to reduce the content of subsequent revalidations. Note that cross-crediting is not available for an expired single-pilot IR – if your Single Pilot Aeroplane Instrument Rating (IR-SPA) is expired then you will require renewal of the IR-SPA which

What are the IR options for pilots who swap between heavy metal (left) and more traditional Permit aircraft (below)?

requires a full proficiency check. Note that your single-pilot privileges are essentially considered as a separate rating except for cross-crediting.

Multi-Engine Piston IR

As a current airline pilot with a valid single-pilot ME IR and valid multi-pilot IR, you are credited with Section 3B (Instrument Flight) of the IR proficiency check but must complete elements of Section 6 (Simulated Asymmetric Flight). Practically, revalidation of an IR-SPA-ME using cross-crediting might comprise an EFATO, asymmetric radar vectored or procedural ILS to go around, and asymmetric radar vectored or procedural non-precision approach to land. However, the IR proficiency check is often combined with a Multi-Engine Piston Class Rating revalidation which includes other additional items.

As the holder of a valid IR-SPA-ME, your privileges cascade down, so that you also hold IR-SPA-SE privileges; you still need a valid class rating such as SEP rating to exercise the privileges of the IR-SPA-SE though!

Single-Engine Piston IR

As an airline pilot with a current multi-pilot IR and a current single-pilot IR, you are credited with the entire IR-SPA-SE, providing you meet the experience requirements. You must complete three departures and approaches under IFR in SEP aircraft annotated in your log book during the period of validity. This must then be presented to an Instrument Rating Examiner or Class Rating Examiner with Instrument Rating Revalidation/Renewal

privileges to sign for revalidation of your IR-SPA-SE in your licence for a further twelve months' validity.

Cross-crediting gotchas

Whether it is single-pilot or multi-pilot, the IR is valid for 12 calendar months. Whilst they show as one Instrument Rating (IR) in Section XII of your licence, the SPA and MPA privileges are essentially separate ratings for renewal and revalidation purposes, and are shown separately in your Certificate of Revalidation within your licence.

If using cross-crediting, the CAA will only allow an examiner to sign up to the expiry date of your multi-pilot IR when revalidating your single-pilot IR. Therefore, for example, if your IR-MPA expires on 30 September, and your IR-SPA is due for revalidation in May, the examiner can only sign your IR-SPA to 30 September until after your next MPA-IR proficiency check, where you will need to return to your examiner so they can re-sign your IR-SPA-ME/SE until its normal expiry date next May! A simple way around this is to complete your IR-SPA renewal proficiency check in the same month, or the month following your IR-MPA licence proficiency check (LPC); your IR-SPA-ME/SE can then be revalidated any time in the last three months of validity after your IR-MPA LPC.

Sounds complicated? There is a helpful table towards the end of CAA Standards Document 14(A), and some information in the CAA Flight Examiner's Handbook. You can contact me via the LAA Pilot Coaching Scheme for guidance and assistance if you are planning on renewing or revalidating your single-pilot Instrument Rating privileges. ■

Jon Cooke is Pilot Coaching Scheme Chairman and Head of Training for the Light Aircraft Association. A detailed profile of all LAA coaches is available on the LAA website under Pilot Coaching.

IMC AND IR COACHING

A NUMBER OF LAA coaches are experienced single-pilot IR holders, and also hold instrument instructor and examiner privileges. Training courses are also planned next year to provide coaches who have suitable IFR experience with the Instrument Rating Instructor certificate. This is intended to provide operational support for LAA members who may wish to use their aircraft IFR. Details of coaches able to provide training and testing are now available on the LAA website under Pilot Coaching. Various categories are listed next to each name. Category 5 indicates that a coach can conduct IMC or IR training and testing.

Sub-categories:
A for IMC training;
B for IR training;
C for IMC testing; and
D for IR testing.

JARGONBUSTER

- IR** – Instrument Rating
- IMC RATING** – Instrument Meteorological Conditions Rating
- IR-SPA** – Instrument Rating valid for Single Pilot Aeroplanes
- IR-MPA** – Instrument Rating valid for Multi Pilot Aeroplanes
- SE** – Single Engine
- ME** – Multi Engine
- SEP** – Single Engine Piston
- MEP** – Multi Engine Piston
- EFATO** – Engine Failure After Take-Off
- ILS** – Instrument Landing System
- IFR** – Instrument Flight Rules

