

LAA COVID ADVICE - STAY SAFE, FLY LATER.

We've noted significant debate in the social media about whether pilots should fly during the current lock down on non-essential travel. We all have personal decisions to make on this; we're all grown-ups and should be relied upon to make sensible judgements. Hopefully this advice will help you make the right decision.

Currently, unlike some other countries, there is no closure of VFR airspace. However, leisure flying is inadvisable. Even if it's legal, it just doesn't seem right, does it? Also, if something goes wrong, our whole community could be accused of recklessly using up emergency resources which are much more vitally needed elsewhere. Remember that others outside aviation might see your flight as an unnecessary indulgence, and you could generate ill-feeling from some around your flying site.

Travel to airfields for leisure flying cannot be regarded as 'essential travel'. We therefore do not recommend members travel to their airfield except to check on the security of their aircraft and facilities when absolutely necessary. If you do, remember that contact with hangar doors and fuel facilities are potential cross-contamination points. Also, if you have a group-owned aircraft, remember that contact points such as door handles and controls are potential areas of contamination. Make sure you use hand gel or wash your hands regularly after contact.

There may be cases where inspection or maintenance work can be justified, but if this is necessary, please ensure the 'social distancing' advice is adhered to and cross-contamination precautions are taken.

We are involved in dialogue with the CAA regarding potentially extending both pilot medical deadlines and developing short-term derogations for those who would have required a flight with an instructor. The CAA's initial priority has been in developing these for professional pilots. They are now working on similar for private licence holders.

All these activities, plus our other work in developing a future strategy for sub-600kg aircraft and greater use of Permit aircraft in ab-initio training, depend on the CAA and DFT recognising our position as a credible organisations and as responsible citizens. Please this bear in mind as you make your personal decisions.

Finally, it goes without saying that the most important thing at this time is to maintain our own physical health to the best of our ability. Many of us are in the age groups that the public health authorities classify as being 'at risk', so do please take all the appropriate precautions and make sure you're around and healthy when flying can legitimately recommence. Stay safe!

Steve Slater

CEO

Light Aircraft Association

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