

CAA Electronic Conspicuity survey

The CAA released a new consultation on 14 July regarding the future carriage of Electronic Conspicuity (EC) equipment in aircraft. The proposals could have significant financial and operational implications for gliding, so it is important that as many members as possible respond.

The consultation proposes that ADS-B Out becomes the primary Electronic Conspicuity technology. Existing technology such as FLARM could continue to be used, but ADS-B Out would also be required if the proposals are adopted.

ADS-B is a signal that contains the GPS position of the aircraft and can be achieved by a transponder or a SkyEcho type device using 1090 MHz.

The subject is technical, the survey is lengthy and there is no guarantee the CAA will make any changes, but if we don't respond we certainly cannot make a difference. I have been following the development of these proposals closely and will prepare a member guide highlighting the key issues affecting gliding. The BGA will also publish its guidance.

Please don't complete the consultation just yet if you would find some guidance helpful. The consultation closes on 22nd September, so there will be plenty of time to read the guidance before responding.

Background

The CAA wants to enable unmanned aircraft (drones and eVTOL) to operate in the same airspace as manned aircraft. To do this, they need a universal EC that allows them to deconflict with conventional manned aircraft. The CAA believes ADS-B is the most suitable technology and is consulting on proposals to require it for almost all aircraft, including gliders and at the expense of the operator. We can continue to use Flarm.

Problems for gliders

This will require either a transponder with an approved certified GPS source or, potentially, a CAP 1391 device such as SkyEcho 2. Some Trig transponders can be connected to an approved certified GPS source, but many existing transponders cannot. A new transponder with a certified GPS will be in the order of at *least* £4000+ before installation. Existing transponders mostly use an uncertified GPS that produces a SIL=0 (signal integrity level) and SDA=0 (system design assurance) signal, which will not be acceptable to the CAA.

SkyEcho 2 is significantly less expensive at around £650 and is a portable device mounted inside the cockpit. Because it uses an internal antenna, its transmitted signal can be partially shielded by the aircraft structure or occupants, making it less effective than an externally mounted transponder antenna in some installations.

Alastair

[Link to survey](#)
[CAP3268 Guidance document from CAA](#)