Age limit in single pilot CAT operations

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Number of properly trained helicopter pilots for single pilot OPS has decreased

Retirement age in EU has been increased to 65 years old or above

Life expectancy in EU has increased
Consequences

- Number of properly trained helicopter pilots for single pilot OPS has decreased
  - Limited response to medical emergencies
- Retirement age in most of the states in EU has been increased to 65 years old or above
  - Social problems for pilots due to early retirement
- Additional stress factor for pilots
FCL.065  Curtailment of privileges of licence holders aged 60 years or more in commercial air transport

(a) Age 60-64. Aeroplanes and helicopters. The holder of a pilot licence who has attained the age of 60 years shall not act as a pilot of an aircraft engaged in commercial air transport except as a member of a multi-pilot crew.

(b) Age 65. Except in the case of a holder of a balloon or sailplane pilot licence, the holder of a pilot licence who has attained the age of 65 years shall not act as a pilot of an aircraft engaged in commercial air transport.

(c) Age 70. The holder of a balloon or sailplane pilot licence who has attained the age of 70 years shall not act as a pilot of a balloon or a sailplane engaged in commercial air transport.

Prior to the applicability of the Aircrew Regulation, some European States allowed single-pilot CAT operations with pilots over the age of 60 under certain circumstances and subject to certain conditions.
During the EASA committee meeting in April 2015, MSs agreed to develop a derogation from the requirements based on agreed mitigating measures to allow pilots involved in HEMS operations only to continue to operate until the age of 65.

February 2016 – FS 3.2 presented a paper for the consideration of EASA Advisory Bodies, on increasing age limit for single pilot CAT ops from 60 to 65
  - RAG members proposed further research on the subject

April 2016 – age limit for single pilot CAT ops was discussed during the EASA Medical Expert Group (MEG) Meeting
  - Medical experts considered that more discussions on the accepted risk level and mitigating measures are needed
7 states applied for art 14.4 exemptions from FCL.065 requirements

Art 14.4 **Member States may grant exemptions** in the event of unforeseen urgent operational circumstances or operational needs of a limited duration, provided the level of safety is not adversely affected. The Agency, the Commission and the other Member States shall be notified of any such exemptions as soon as they become repetitive or where they are granted for periods of more than two months.

Art 14.5 **The Agency shall assess whether the exemptions** notified by a Member State are less restrictive than the applicable Community provisions and, within one month of being notified thereof, shall issue a recommendation in accordance with Article 18(b) on whether these exemptions comply with the general safety objectives of this Regulation or any other rule of Community law. If an exemption does not comply with the general safety objectives of this Regulation or any other rule of Community law, the Commission shall take a decision not to permit the exemption in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 65(7). In such a case, the Member State concerned shall revoke the exemption.
Mitigating measures

- Enhanced medical examination including comprehensive cardiological, neurological, ophthalmological and ENT evaluation

- Cognitive assessment

- Enhanced OPC, LC and activity reports from the Operator to the licensing authority

- Flight time limitations for reduced workload
The most frequent causes for sudden incapacitation are cardiovascular problems.

Compared with previous decade the incidence of stroke and sudden cardiac arrest in the 55-65 group age has decreased, however it still is considerable.

Are general population studies applicable for pilot population?
Participants:
- ICAO, EASA, EU Commission, NAAs, other stakeholders

Consensus:
- Degenerative effects of aging
- Age 60 limit no longer appropriate for the single pilot operations

Possible solutions:
- Amend the requirement, but maintain a fixed age limit
- Incorporate age factor in the risk assessment and remove the fixed age limit
Amend the requirement, but maintain a fixed age limit:

- Easier to implement for the regulators and AMEs
- Arbitrary cut-off criteria
Incorporate **age factor** in the **risk assessment** and remove the fixed age limit.

- Performance based
- Difficult to put in practice
- Requires a solid risk assessment matrix
- Requires a well defined acceptable risk level for each type of operations
Challenges

- Is the shift noticed in the morbidity and mortality of general population applicable for pilot population?
- Is the acceptable risk level applicable for all types of operations?
- Lack of a simulator study for results of sudden incapacitation in rotary wing environment
Evidence based decision

- EASA Pilots’ age limitation study – tender published in 14 of June 2017
- 4 tenders received – technical assessment of offers
- Final decision October 2017
- 1 year of study

Support from EASA States
Thank you for your attention

Your safety is our mission.