

Transponders have been a requirement in controlled airspace in New Zealand since the installation of secondary radar in the early 1990's. The rules have not changed, it is just that we are tightening up their application due to events that have occurred where transponders have not been operating. Now that many aircraft are equipped with ACAS, it is not only the secondary radar environment that enables aircraft to be "seen" by the air traffic controllers or other aircraft.

We do accept however, that tightening up of the application of the rules will have an adverse effect on those private operators who have private airstrips located within the boundaries of a Control Zone or operate from the airfield within the control zone and who have been able to operate for a number of years without a transponder. We acknowledge that in many of these cases it may not be possible to fit a transponder to the aircraft.

To that end we have reviewed our application of the rules and have decided to make amendments to cater for those operators who:-

1. Operate from a privately owned airstrip within a Control Zone or from the airfield within the control zone.
2. It is not possible to retrofit their aircraft with a fully compliant transponder.
3. The operation is purely recreational, not commercial.
4. The aircraft owner was domiciled at the location with the aircraft housed at the property prior to 1 July 2012.

Operators in this category will shortly be contacted by the appropriate Chief Controller to discuss their specific situation and reach agreement on how they will be able to continue their operation while they live at that location and operate the specific aircraft that is not transponder equipped.

The conditions under which a dispensation may be granted are:-

- a. They operate in accordance with the increased separation criteria stated in the Manual of Air Traffic Services for non-transponder operations (RAC 5.2 201.1)
- b. They adhere to specific procedures as agreed with the Chief Controller and approved in writing by the Airways Towers Manager and Manager Policy and Standards.
- c. The aircraft are equipped with a radio and can communicate with the tower at all times including while on the ground prior to departure and on arrival.
- d. The approval relates to a specific aircraft, as recorded in the approval.
- e. If operating from a private strip, any other aircraft operating from that strip must be fully compliant.

- f. Should the aircraft be sold or otherwise disposed of, the dispensation ceases.
- g. For a private airstrip should the property be sold the dispensation ceases.
- h. The procedures relate to departure from the Control Zone and arrival from outside the Control Zone and limited operations within the Control Zone.
- i. Should technology advances mean that light weight low power source transponders become available; these will be fitted where possible.

We will be asking that all non-transponder equipped aircraft write to me to receive a dispensation and then work with the local chief controller to work on procedures relevant to their situation. Letters should be going to operators over the next week and we aim to have the situation rectified by the 1st of November.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

Michele Dumble

Towers manager