

# Stay in Control

Pilots-in-command must resist the temptation to let their aviator-passenger 'have a crack' at piloting because things can quickly spiral out of control.

If you're a pilot, one of your responsibilities is to maintain control of your aircraft at all times.

Apart from some specific exceptions, only a qualified instructor can hand over control to a passenger, even if that person is an experienced pilot.

Yet CAA Safety Investigator and current flying instructor Colin Grounsell is concerned it happens anyway.

"Some pilots think it's okay to let the pilot sitting next to them take control of the aircraft, to get a feel of it, and have a go but that can be a bad idea."

He says the rules – 61.103 *General* and 61.105 *Solo flight requirements* – are there for good reason.

"The pilot you're sitting next to might not be type-rated on that aircraft. There are usually differences between the aircraft that they are used to flying and your machine, and that can lead to an accident."

## What can go wrong?

Bill Penman is the Operations Officer at RAANZ (Recreational Aviation Association of NZ).

The experienced microlight instructor says you can never anticipate how someone will handle your aircraft.

"Years ago, before becoming an instructor, I took someone up and let them have a go with instructions along the lines of 'if you pull it back it goes up', and he yanked the whole stick back and heck we went up about 45/50 degrees or so. Gave me quite a fright so I was never going to allow that again."

Bill says over-controlling (using more movement in the control column than is necessary) is just one of a number of things

that can go wrong if you don't have intimate knowledge of the aircraft.

"If the person is not used to the aircraft, they could have difficulty looking at the horizon, keeping the wings level, and so on.

"Control columns, for instance, come in several different styles and can have a different feel and reactions. The passenger can also easily put their foot in the wrong place and set something off, which could be unsavoury."

## Leave it to the experts

The CAA's Principal Aviation Examiner, David Harrison, says aside from some rare exceptions, the only time someone can take the controls of an aircraft is in the presence of a qualified instructor.

"A private or commercial pilot is not entitled to give control to another person whether they are a pilot or not, unless of course they are themselves a current instructor.

"Unlike the general pilot population, an instructor is trained to recognise when things are going wrong, and to take the appropriate remedial action. Instructors also use well-briefed procedures to hand over aircraft control to ensure that both pilots are not flying at the same time, or worse, that nobody is in control."

Bill says instructors are always monitoring the controls, ready to take over, and are trained to react quickly.

There's also a certain skill in taking back control again.

"The pilot has to get the aircraft back into its original flight path, and this requires the experience of an instructor," says Bill. ■

