

Advisory Circular

AC146-2

Revision 0

Delegations for the approval of design changes

10 September 2026

General

Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Advisory Circulars (ACs) contain information about standards, practices, and procedures that the Director has found to be an **acceptable means of compliance** with the associated rule.

Consideration will be given to other methods of compliance that are presented to the Director. When new standards, practices, or procedures are found to be acceptable they will be added to the appropriate AC.

Purpose

This AC provides guidance on the granting of a delegation for the approval of design changes in accordance with Section 462 of the Civil Aviation Act 2023 (CA Act).

Related Rules

This AC relates to Civil Aviation Rule Part 146, *Aircraft Design Organisations – Certification* and Part 21, *Certification of Products and Parts*.

Change Notice

Revision 0 is the initial issue of this AC. Some content was moved from Revision 2 of AC146-1 to this AC.

Version History

History Log

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Introduction

1. Part 21 prescribes the requirements for the approval of aircraft design changes and Part 146 governs the certification of Aircraft Design Organisations.
2. Section 462 of the CA Act allows the Director to delegate the approval of aircraft design changes (in accordance with Part 21.73(a)(2) and 21.505) to a person who is not a CAA employee. Part 146.11 allows the holder of a Design Organisation certificate to employ such a person to approve aircraft design changes.
3. This AC provides guidance that the Director has found to be an acceptable means of compliance with Appendix A of Part 146, namely the associated privileges and limitations and the qualifications and experience required for the grant of a delegation for the approval of design changes.
4. This AC should be read in conjunction with AC146-1.

Rule 146 Appendix A.1 — Privileges and Limitations

A.1(b) – Design organisation association

5. The design delegation holder is not permitted to carry out their delegated approval function outside a design organisation. This ensures that the support structure is available for that person to satisfactorily approve design changes. Therefore, the design delegation holder relinquishes their delegation if they leave a design organisation.
6. When a design delegation holder moves from one design organisation to another, or when contracted to more than one design organisation, the delegation must be re-issued to refer to the new design organisation. This applies whether or not the scope of the delegation changes. Design delegation holders intending to move organisations should contact CAA as soon as possible to allow time for the re-issue, because delegation privileges at the new organisation cannot be exercised until the re-issue is completed.

A.1(d) – Class A/B Design Changes

7. Design changes are divided into two classes for the purpose of approval by delegation holders:
 - Class A are those design changes that require comprehensive engineering justification, assessment, and substantiation:
 - Class B are those design changes that do not require comprehensive engineering justification, assessment, and substantiation.
8. These classes of design changes should not be confused with classification of major / minor modification or repair. Refer to Appendix D of AC146-1 for additional guidance.
9. The classes of design changes (Class A or B), which may be approved by a delegation holder, are included within each scope statement documented on an Instrument of Delegation. Refer to section 146 A.1(e) below for additional details.

A.1(e) – Scope of Design Approvals

10. This section details a range of terms and statements used to describe common conditions of an Instrument of Delegation issued for the approval of modifications and repairs.
11. The conditions stated on an Instrument of Delegation include the scope of design changes which may be approved by the delegation holder. Any breach of such conditions invalidates the exercise of the delegated functions and powers.
12. The terminology and statements included in this section indicate a range of conditions (scope statements) which may be sought by an applicant for a design delegation, subject to demonstration of competence in each area.
13. The final conditions of a delegation may differ from the statements contained in this AC. This section presents a range of scope statements, but not the only statements which may be included in an Instrument of Delegation.
14. An applicant for a design delegation, including an applicant seeking an amendment to the scope of their delegation, may propose their own terminology for the scope of the design changes. The proposed terminology must allow CAA to assess the applicant's competency in each relevant area and must be capable of clear interpretation.
15. An application for a design delegation whether for an initial issue, renewal, or amendment, can be made using the "[Application for Delegation of the Director](#)" form available on the CAA website.
16. **Note:** *an applicant or holder of a Part 146 Design Organisation Certificate should also consider alignment between the scope of work to be undertaken by the organisation (as required by rule 146.67(a)(8)) and the scope of design changes which may be approved by delegation holders employed or engaged by the organisation. Refer to the section on rule 146.11 of AC146-1 for further guidance.*

Framework for Scope Statements

17. The scope of design changes which may be approved by a delegation holder are described by three criteria:
 - **Product Scope** – the size and type of products to which design changes can be made.
 - **Engineering Scope** – the physical or functional aspects of a product to which design changes can be made.
 - **Conditions** – inclusion-based statements which describe the type or extent of design changes which can be approved.¹
18. The description of each Product Scope also specifies whether the delegation holder may approve Modification or Repairs (or both) for that type of product.

¹ It is current CAA policy to issue inclusion-based delegations as they are clearer on the issued scope. Exclusion-based delegations may still be in circulation and they remain valid until the expiry date or they are amended. CAA also may issue exclusions as needed.

19. Engineering Scope statements are included within each Product Scope, and these statements also specify whether the delegation holder may approve a Class A or Class B design change in that area.
20. Condition statements are included within each Engineering Scope statement.
21. Any terms or statements which appear in this AC but do not appear in an Instrument of Delegation are **not within the scope of that delegation**. This applies to inclusion-based delegations only.
22. All Instruments of Delegation include two standard conditions:
 - Functions and powers shall not be exercised in respect of modifications that are classified as major design changes, which are defined in a “Schedule One” attachment to each delegation, without the prior written consent of the Director of Civil Aviation.
 - Other modifications and repairs only with the prior written consent of the Director of Civil Aviation.

The scope of design changes described in this AC do not affect the applicability or interpretation of these conditions in any respect.

Example Scope Statements

23. Table 1 includes common **Product Scope** terms which may be included on an Instrument of Delegation.

Table 1: Instrument of Delegation – example Product Scope terms

Product Scope	Description
Large Aeroplanes	An aeroplane (as defined in rule Part 1) with a certification basis of Title 14, Part 25 of the Code of Federal Regulations. ²
Small Aeroplanes	An aeroplane (as defined in rule Part 1) with a certification basis of Title 14, Part 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations. ²
Large Rotorcraft	A rotorcraft (as defined in rule Part 1) with a certification basis of Title 14, Part 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations. ²
Small Rotorcraft	A rotorcraft (as defined in rule Part 1) with a certification basis of Title 14, Part 27 of the Code of Federal Regulations. ²

² Or a set of airworthiness design standards that the Director determines: comply with ICAO Annex 8 and provide an equivalent level of safety to the stated airworthiness design standard.

Powerplants (piston engines) ³	A reciprocating engine with a certification basis of Title 14, Part 33 of the Code of Federal Regulations ²
Powerplants (gas turbine engines) ³	A gas turbine engine with a certification basis of Title 14, Part 33 of the Code of Federal Regulations ²
Powerplants (electric) ³	A type of aircraft engine that converts electric power into mechanical power or thrust used for propulsion. Not including gearboxes, energy storage systems, thrusters, or electrical power generation systems.
Powerplants (hybrid-electric) ³	A type of aircraft engine that generates electrical power for use as primary aircraft propulsive power.
Propellers (fixed pitch) ⁴	A propeller (as defined in rule Part 1) with a certification basis of Title 14, Part 35 of the Code of Federal Regulations ² , whose blade pitch cannot be changed while rotating. This product scope includes ground-adjustable propellers.
Propellers (variable pitch)	A propeller (as defined in rule Part 1) with a certification basis of Title 14, Part 35 of the Code of Federal Regulations ² , which permits a change of blade pitch while the propeller is rotating. This product scope includes constant-speed propellers.
Large UAS	An unmanned aircraft system (as defined in rule Part 1) which incorporates an unmanned aircraft with a gross mass of more than 25 kg and which has been issued with a Type Certificate or Type Acceptance Certificate in accordance with Part 21.
Balloons	As defined in rule Part 1.

³ Multiple Powerplant product categories may be added depending on DDH competency e.g. “Powerplants (piston and gas turbine engines)”

⁴ Multiple Propeller product categories may be added depending on DDH competency e.g. “Propellers (fixed and variable pitch)”

24. Table 2 includes common **Engineering Scope** statements which may be included under various Product Types.

Table 2: Instrument of Delegation – example Engineering Scope statements

Engineering Scope	Description
Structures	Design changes to components and structural elements which support loads. Including (but not limited to) the determination, analysis and testing of loads, changes to design details, material specifications or processes that affect the strength or durability of parts.
Avionics Systems	Including (but not limited to) design changes that affect any electrical or electronic equipment and systems that affect flight operations, navigation, communication, monitoring or control. ⁶
Electrical Systems	Including (but not limited to) design changes that utilise electrical components and circuits designed to generate, transmit, distribute, or store electrical power.
Cabin Interiors	Including (but not limited to) design changes that affect crashworthiness, passenger compartment or flight deck interior arrangements, cargo and baggage compartments, emergency equipment, material flammability, occupant protection and emergency egress.
Rotors & Drive Systems	Including (but not limited to) design changes that affect rotor blades, rotor hubs, transmission systems, gears, drive shafts, couplings and associated systems.
Mechanical Systems	Including (but not limited to) design changes that affect flight control, environmental, hydraulic, oxygen, ice protection, water systems, fuel systems, wheels/tyres/brakes, hoist/lifting, role equipment, evacuation systems.
Flight	Design changes that may affect aircraft performance, flight characteristics, handling (including but not limited to aircraft controllability, manoeuvrability, stability) and flight crew interface.
Acoustical	Design changes that affect compliance with aircraft noise standards (e.g. ICAO Annex 16 Volume I or equivalent).
Emissions	Design changes that affect compliance with aircraft emission standards (e.g. ICAO Annex 16 Volume II or equivalent).
Airborne Software	Including (but not limited to) design changes that involve computer programmes (including associated data) that are installed on and executes within an aircraft to perform functions that support the operation, control,

	monitoring, communication, navigation, or safety of the aircraft and its systems. ⁵
Airborne Electronic Hardware	Including (but not limited to) design changes that impact electronic hardware installed on an aircraft that performs intended functions through electronic circuitry. It includes both programmable and non-programmable electronic components used in airborne equipment.

⁵ The integration of software and AEH items that are delivered as traceable, certified, released items is within the “Avionic Systems” engineering scope (as un-modified parts or components that are utilised by an avionics system)

25. Table 3 includes **Engineering Scope** statements which may be included under a **Powerplant** Product Scope.

Table 3: Instrument of Delegation – example Powerplant Engineering Scope statements

Core engine	Design changes affecting core sections of an aircraft engine involved in converting chemical energy (oxygen and fuel sources) into thermal and mechanical energy (mass flow and shaft rotation). Reciprocating engines – core sections include the cylinder head, pistons, crank shaft, valves, cam shafts, and crank case. Gas turbine engines – core sections include the compressor, combustion and turbine stages.
Fuel metering systems	Design changes affecting components and systems involved in supplying the correct mixture of fuel and air to aircraft engines (including but not limited to; carburettors and fuel control units).
Lubrication systems	Design changes affecting components and systems involved in the distribution and cooling of lubricants used to reduce friction within an aircraft engine (including but not limited to; oil tanks, pumps, filters, oil cooling components).
Ignition systems	Design changes affecting components and systems involved in providing a high-energy spark for igniting the air/fuel mixture in the combustion chamber of an aircraft engine.
Exhaust & thrust reverser systems	Design changes affecting components and systems involved in discharging or diverting fan or exhaust gases from an aircraft engine (including but not limited to; exhaust collectors/manifolds, heat exchangers, exhaust cones, nozzles, thrust reverser systems).
Induction systems & engine cowls	Components and systems that affect the condition and flow of air through, and immediately around, an aircraft engine (including but not limited to; inlet and fan ducts, nacelle panels, air filters, induction manifolds, throttle body, and superchargers).

26. Table 4 includes **Condition** statements which may be included under the relevant Engineering Scope statements (as noted).

Table 4: Instrument of Delegation – example Condition statements

Engineering Scope	Condition	Description
Structures	Including metallic primary and secondary structures	Primary structure is structure which carries flight, ground, or pressurisation loads, and whose failure would reduce the structural integrity of the aircraft. Secondary structures are those that are not primary load carrying members, and their failure would not reduce the structural integrity of the airframe or prevent the aircraft from continuing safe flight and landing.
	Including composite primary and secondary structures	Design changes to structural elements constructed of fibre reinforced materials or those that involve structural bonding. Including (but not limited to) the analysis of composite structures using classical lamination theory.
	Including fatigue (safe life) and damage tolerance analysis	Design changes requiring analysis to confirm that structural elements will not degrade below their design ultimate value (safe life) or retain their required residual strength after sustaining damage (damage tolerance).
	Including aeroelastic considerations	Refer to Appendix A of this AC for a detailed description of “aeroelastic considerations”.
	Including dynamic components	Refer to Appendix A of this AC for a detailed description of “dynamic components”.
	Including additively manufactured components	Design changes involving components made from 3D model data, usually layer upon layer, as opposed to subtractive or formative manufacturing methods. Reference ISO/ASTM 52900.

Avionics Systems	Limited to integration and installation only	Design changes which do not involve the modification of discrete avionics components (required for compliance with airworthiness design standards). "Modification" includes any changes to the configuration required for the operation of such items (e.g. software versions or settings).
	Including design changes to avionic components	Design changes which incorporate modifications to the configuration of discrete required avionics components (required for compliance with airworthiness design standards). Examples of avionics components include (but are not limited to) instruments, radios, navigation receivers, antenna, sensors, PSUs, FMS/GPS modules, CPUs, electronic displays etc.
	Including design changes involving NVIS Including design changes to certify NVIS systems or design changes to previously certified NVIS systems	Design changes involving components and systems required to show compliance with acceptable airworthiness design standards for Night Vision Imaging Systems. Refer AC91-13.
	Including design changes to avionic systems that affect the IFR certification and/or operational capability of the aircraft	Design changes that involve components and systems required for IFR operations. These design changes may involve complex systems safety analysis, environmental qualification and human factors evaluation.
Flight	Limited to showings of 'unaffected'	Limited to design changes where there is a negligible difference in aircraft performance, flight characteristics, handling, and flight crew interface compared to the baseline design.
	Including design changes that affect flight crew interface only	Including design changes which affect flight crew procedures, crew workload, instrumentation, crew alerting, marking and placards, but where there is negligible difference in aircraft

		performance, flight characteristics and handling compared to the baseline design.
	Including design changes that affect aircraft performance and/or flight crew interface only	Including design changes which affect aircraft performance and/or flight crew interface, but where there is negligible difference in the aircraft handling and flight characteristics compared to the baseline design.
	Including design changes that affect aircraft performance, flight characteristics, handling and/or flight crew interface (excluding flutter, aeroelastic effects and aerodynamic-structural resonance, spinning, H/V envelope determination, and autorotation characteristics)	Including design changes which affect aircraft performance, flight characteristics, handling and/or flight crew interface, but excluding those which require a finding of? compliance with 14 CFR 23.221, 23.629, 23.2510, 23.2245, 27.71, 27.87 (or equivalent airworthiness requirements).
	Including design changes that affect aircraft performance, flight characteristics, handling and flight crew interface (including flutter, aeroelastic effects and aerodynamic-structural resonance spinning, H/V envelope determination, and autorotation characteristics) ⁶ .	Including design changes which affect aircraft performance, flight characteristics, handling and/or flight crew interface, including those which require a finding of compliance with 14 CFR 23.221, 23.629, 23.2510, 23.2245, 27.71, 27.87 (or equivalent airworthiness requirements).
Acoustical	Limited to showings of 'unaffected'	Limited to design changes where there is nil or negligible difference to product noise levels.
Emissions	Limited to showings of 'unaffected'	Limited to design changes where there is nil or negligible difference to product emissions.
Airborne Software or Airborne Electronic Hardware	Limited to design changes involving software at Design Assurance Level C or D	Where the Design Assurance Level has been determined in accordance with acceptable design standards.
	Limited to item level finding of compliance	Applicable when the DDH scope is limited to AEH and SW.

⁶ Specific terms to be included based on DDH competency.

146 A.1(f) – Flight Manual Supplements

27. A delegation holder may approve flight manual supplements in conjunction with design change approvals. However, this approval is limited to flight manual supplements that result directly from a design change the organisation develops and the approval by the delegation holder.
28. While the descriptive data of a design change may consist of a flight manual supplement only, such a design change still requires substantiation and a statement of compliance to enable approval by a delegation holder (i.e. a flight manual amendment alone cannot be approved without supporting data and evidence required for approval).
29. Flight manual supplements are further described in Appendix B to AC146-1. AC21-5 also includes a template flight manual supplement for aircraft ferry fuel systems.

Rule 146 Appendix A.2 — Qualifications

A.2(b)(2) – Competency Assessment

30. The interview for the delegation holder is considered a critical assessment of their understanding and experience with respect to designs and design changes. This interview will determine the scope and any limitations or restrictions that may be placed on the delegation.

A.2(b)(3) and (4) – Qualifications and Experience

31. The qualification requirements are provided. The applicant for a delegation will be expected to meet the academic qualifications as a minimum to be considered for a delegation interview.

Maintaining Competency

32. After the issue of the delegation, the holder is expected to maintain some form of CPD. This is considered important to ensure that the delegation holder remains current with up-to-date technologies and the application of professional standards to their work. Delegation holders should examine the organisation's procedures and ensure that CPD is available and supported by the organisation.

Appendix A

This appendix provides a description and interpretation of the terms “aeroelastic considerations” and “dynamic components” (conditions associated with the Structures engineering scope), aligned with guidance material that is used and developed by the FAA.

Aeroelastic Considerations

The term "aeroelastic" is applied to an important class of phenomena which involves the mutual interaction between the inertial, aerodynamic, and elastic forces in a structure. These forces can interact to give rise to a variety of aeroelastic phenomena ranging from transient or dynamic responses because of external forces (vibration or buffeting) to aeroelastic instabilities (flutter or divergence).

1. **Vibration** An oscillation of the structure or of a control surface resulting from an independent external excitation.
2. **Buffeting** A random oscillation of the structure resulting from unsteady aerodynamic forces, usually associated with separated flow.
3. **Flutter** The unstable self-excited structural oscillation at a definite frequency where energy is extracted from the airstream by the motion of the structure. The deformation and motion of the structure result in forces on the structure that tend to maintain or augment the motion. The displacement modes associated with potential flutter instabilities are often called "flutter modes" even though they may be well damped or do not become unstable within the flight envelope.
4. **Whirl Flutter** Flutter in which the aerodynamic and gyroscopic forces associated with rotations and displacements in the plane of a propeller or large turbofan play an important role. The displacement modes associated with whirl flutter are frequently called "whirl modes."
5. **Divergence** A static instability at a speed where the aerodynamic forces resulting from the deformation of the structure exceed the elastic restoring forces resulting from the same deformation.
6. **Control Reversal** A condition in which the intended effects of displacing a given component of the control system are completely overcome by the aeroelastic effects of structural deformation, resulting in reversed command at higher speeds.
7. **Deformation Instability** The loss of aircraft stability and control as a result of the aeroelastic effects of structural deformation.

Aeroelastic considerations relate to FAR 2X.629 requirements. In accordance with the AC 2x.629, considerable judgment is often required to determine the degree of re-evaluation necessary. If the mass, mass distribution, or the stiffness distribution are affected sufficiently to result in possible significant changes in resonant frequencies of major modes, mode shapes, or mass coupling terms in the flutter equations, then some re-evaluation, such as pre-mod and post-mod Ground Vibration Test (GVT) data comparison, or analysis may be required.

Design changes which require such substantiation may only be approved by a design delegation holder with “aeroelastic considerations” included on their Instrument of Delegation.

Dynamic Components

There is no clear definition of the term dynamic component as such, but the term is often associated with rotorcraft in this context for dynamic component classification. If we analyse the term 'dynamic' on its own, it can mean some form of control input in such a way that a transient (time-varying) response of the aircraft is generated.

Aircraft parts that are not exposed to the airflow cannot experience any aeroelastic effects (dynamic or static). A dynamic loss of aeroelastic stability involves a motion. Some components that are not exposed to the airflow may still move.

Some examples in the rotorcraft environment where a component is classified as a dynamic component are below:

- Rotor heads, including hubs, hinges, dampers
- Rotor drive components, including gearboxes and transmission shafts
- Control system components, including control rods, servos, swashplates.

Components that are classified as dynamic components will be referenced in the manuals of the OEM's supplied documentation such as Overhaul Manuals and Maintenance Manuals.

Noting the above examples of dynamic components are in relation to rotorcraft. The intention of the dynamic component condition is not to break down the aeroplane / rotorcraft structure into its core detail of design but rather to categorise the FOC actions to the existing/current FAR requirements.

Reference Documentation

[FAA Dynamic Regulatory System](#)

[FAA AC 27-1B Certification of Normal Category Rotorcraft](#)

[FAA AC23-629-1B Means of Compliance Flutter](#)

[FAA AC 25.629-1C - Aeroelastic Stability Substantiation of Transport Category Aircraft](#)

Appendix B

This appendix provides a template to indicate how particular scope statements and conditions may be applied on an individual's Instrument of Delegation. Standard conditions are also included for completeness.

Note: *italic text* to be replaced by the terms found in Tables 1-4 of this AC, or equivalent terms acceptable to the Director.

This template is provided for indicative purposes only and may be varied in an individual's Instrument of Delegation at the discretion of the Director.

INSTRUMENT OF DELEGATION CIVIL AVIATION ACT 2023

PURSUANT TO Section 462 of the Civil Aviation Act 2023 and acting with the written consent of the Chief Executive of the Ministry of Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport (acting under delegation from the Minister of Transport), given on the day of

I, **[Name of Director]**, Director of Civil Aviation,

HEREBY DELEGATE TO—

[NAME OF DELEGATION HOLDER]

[Title of Delegation Holder]

[Name of Design Organisation]

THE FOLLOWING FUNCTIONS AND POWERS:

The functions and powers contained in Civil Aviation Rule 21.73(a)(2) and 21.505 to approve modifications and repairs:

- (a) in accordance with Civil Aviation Rule 21.81 by approving the modification's technical data under Civil Aviation Rule 21.505; and
- (b) in accordance with Civil Aviation Rule 21.433, by treating repairs as design changes to be approved as modifications in accordance with paragraph A.

EXCEPT THAT—

this Delegation does not include the power contained in Civil Aviation Rule 21.505(d)(3) to accept a level of safety provided by factors that compensate for airworthiness requirements that are not complied with.

SUBJECT TO—

the following conditions, the breach of any of which invalidates the exercise of the delegated functions and powers:

- 1) The functions and powers shall only be exercised in respect of work performed by ***[name of Design Organisation]*** under Design Organisation Certificate Number ***[DOXXXXX]*** in accordance with the ***[Title of Design Organisation Exposition]***.
- 2) These functions and powers shall only be exercised in respect of:
 - a) Modification and/or Repairs to ***Product Scope 1*** within the following scope:
 - i. ***Engineering Scope 1***, Class ***A/B*** – ***Condition 1*** and ***Condition 2*** etc
 - ii. ***Engineering Scope 2***, Class ***A/B*** – ***Condition 1***
 - iii. ***[Additional Engineering Scope statements as applicable...]***

- b) Modification and/or Repairs to **Product Scope 2** within the following scope:
 - i. **Engineering Scope 1**, Class **A/B – Condition 1** and **Condition 2** etc
 - ii. **Engineering Scope 2**, Class **A/B – Condition 1**
 - iii. **[Additional Engineering Scope statements as applicable...]**
 - c) Other modifications and repairs only with the prior written consent of the Director and subject to any limitations or conditions prescribed by the Director.
- 3) These functions and powers shall not be exercised in respect of modifications that are classified as major design changes (as defined in Schedule One), without the prior written consent of the Director of Civil Aviation.
 - 4) The Delegate shall approve each modification or repair in a written form that has been accepted by the Director of Civil Aviation.
 - 5) The Delegate shall not delegate to any other person any function or power hereby delegated.

In accordance with Section 463(2) of the Civil Aviation Act 2023, this Delegation is valid from **[date of issue]**, and is valid for a period of X years, unless withdrawn earlier in writing by the Director.

Notwithstanding the above, this Delegation expires if one or more of the following occur:

- i. The period of validity of this Delegation comes to an end; or
- ii. The Design Organisation Certificate Number **[DO XXXXX]** ceases to remain in force; or
- iii. **[Delegate name]** ceases to be employed by **[name of Design Organisation]**; or
- iv. This Delegation is voluntarily surrendered to the Director of Civil Aviation.

On coming into effect this Instrument of Delegation replaces all Instruments of Delegation previously issued to the Delegation Holder, which I hereby revoke.