

# Weight off Shoulders of Amateur Builders!

Patrick Gilligan

Great news from Transport Canada, Maintenance and Manufacturing Standards:

Non-certified amateur built fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft will no longer be limited by weight or by passenger occupancy.

Specific reference to aircraft weight or occupancy limits and in the case of lighter than air aircraft, buoyancy or cubic capacity limits were simply removed from the existing exemption Section 549.01 of the CARs and Chapter 549 of the Airworthiness Manual. Although this new amendment is not available on TC's website as of the writing of this article. The referenced document can be found at:

[http://www.tc.gc.ca/aviation/applications/exemptions/docs/en/1298\\_Att.htm](http://www.tc.gc.ca/aviation/applications/exemptions/docs/en/1298_Att.htm)

Background: TC received an initial request from a manufacturer for a specific project to be located in Canada because but it did not meet the current rule of 5000 lbs and 4 seats. The manufacturer wished to use the amateur built rules to conveniently authorize construction of a new aircraft design. TC acknowledged that existing aircraft were already operating successfully in the United States and to not allow these A-B aircraft limited by this artificial weight and occupancy to operate as Canadian registered non-certified A-B aircraft was unjustified. An exemption was proposed for this project.

In January 2006, a CARAC Part V Maintenance and Manufacturing "Working Group" on Recreational Aircraft, co-chaired by COPA and Transport Canada, was formed with representatives from every organization interested in non-certified aircraft in Canada. The primary goal of this working group was to recommend removing unnecessary bureaucratic burdens, while maintaining or enhancing existing safety levels, and bringing the technical and operational standards in line with current and future technological advancements.

In January 2007, the Working Group's Final Report was submitted to CARAC Technical Committee. Forty-two recommendations were proposed, one of which was "to allow operation of A-B aircraft exceeding the current weight and occupancy limits". For more information regarding this report go to this link:

[http://www.copanational.org/non-members/body\\_files/HomePageStory182.htm](http://www.copanational.org/non-members/body_files/HomePageStory182.htm)

The momentum created by the initial request to TC and the Working Group's proposed recommendations spurred an internal risk assessment within TC and the decision to remove these limits could actually enhance safety by eliminating the need to comply with an arbitrary weight limit, which could for example restrict fuel reserves for certain operations in order to meet maximum take off weight.

COPA's investment throughout the year of 2006, providing input and working closely with the Working Group is now bearing fruit, improving the prospects for owning and flying non-certified aircraft.