

## **Guidelines for Visiting Pilots**

These guidelines are for the benefit of visiting pilots. Visiting pilots should be aware that in windy conditions Shenington can be a challenging site to fly from and all visitors should obtain a full briefing and obtain permission, regardless of conditions, from the duty instructor before rigging/flying.

### ***The Launch Point: General Hazards and Safety Precautions***

The launch point is the most hazardous area of the gliding field with a number of risks. Safety precautions are of paramount importance and the following should be observed at all times:-

- Always follow the instructions of the Launch Point Controller (LPC).
- Stay behind the glider to be launched unless specifically authorised to go forward by the LPC.
- Do not obstruct the LPC's line of sight and signals communication.
- Do not walk in front of a glider once a cable or rope has been attached.
- Be aware when handling ropes or cables. They might move unexpectedly. Never touch the second cable when a glider is being launched on the first cable. There is always a risk of the second cable becoming entangled with the first and becoming "live".
- Noise should be kept to a minimum at the launch point to stop interference with the launch signalling process.
- In the event of a launch failure always ensure that the gliders are well clear and to one side of the cables before they are retrieved back to the winch.

### ***Launch Point Procedures***

The requirements for cable launching and aerotowing are considered separately and the special procedures for operating aerotowing and cable launching concurrently are dealt with as a separate section.

### ***The Winch Launch Sequence***

The tasks involved are illustrated by a typical sequence of events, as follows:-

- A Launch Point person removes the cables from the retrieve vehicle when it arrives. He/she must make sure that the second cable is well clear of the first and that the parachute attached to the second cable is well clear of aircraft, people or ground obstructions. The down-wind cable is normally used first. The cable retrieve driver/winch driver then returns to the winch when the route is clear and awaits instructions from the launch point.
- The Launch Point person selects the appropriate weak link for the glider to be launched. A chart giving the appropriate weak links for each glider should be available at the launch point. Remember it is the pilot's responsibility to know the appropriate weak link and to check that the correct link has been attached.
- The pilot must be in position, with his glider suitably lined up at the head of the launch queue, forward of any launch point control vehicles, with his pre-flight checks completed and ready to launch. This is not the time to be still carrying out adjustments and if a pilot is not ready they may be pulled off line.
- The Launch Point person takes the cable to the glider and waits for the pilot's instruction to attach the cable. By accepting the cable, the pilot indicates that he is ready to be launched.
- The pilot indicates that he is ready to launch by asking for the cable.
- The Launch Point person asks the pilot "are your airbrakes closed and locked ? ", waits for a positive reply and then instructs the pilot to open the cable release hook with the word "Open" and when the ring is in place, he asks the pilot to close the release hook with the word "Close". The pilot will repeat the instructions to affirm.
- The Launch Point person checks the security of the cable attachment by pulling on the strop, forward of the weak link assembly. This checks the ring in the release mechanism and also checks the security of the intervening linkages. He then carefully lays the cable on the ground and calls "Cable on and secure" and walks to the wingtip on the ground.

- The Launch Point person then puts the wings level and checks all around for possible conflict with the launch.
- After seeing that there is no conflict the Launch Point person says to the pilot "all clear above and behind" ,signals to take up slack and at the same time calling out to the pilot "Take up slack".
- When it is seen that all the slack is out of the cable then the Launch Point person signals all out and calls to the pilot "all out".
 

**Note.** If any potential problem is identified, then the launch should be stopped. Whoever spots the problem should shout "STOP" and hold one hand above the head as a visual signal. The Signaller will then relay the STOP signal to the winch, using the prime signalling system, backed up by a verbal "STOP" command. It is the responsibility of everyone at the launch point to call for a STOP if a potential threat to the safety of the launch is identified.
- If a STOP signal is given, or the pilot wishes to abort the launch, the pilot should release the cable immediately.

### ***The Aerotow Launch Sequence***

The tasks involved are illustrated by a typical sequence of events, as follows:-

- The placing of the launch point and direction of the launch will be determined by the DI.
- The gliders will form a single line queue awaiting the launch.
- The pilot must be in position, with his glider suitably lined up at the head of the launch queue, forward of any launch point control vehicles, with his pre-flight checks completed and ready to launch. This is not the time to still be carrying out adjustments and if a pilot is not ready they may be pulled off line.
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- The Launch Point person or a member of the launch crew collects the glider end of the towrope. If not completed before ensure that the release has been checked for operation.
- The Launch Point person waits for the pilot's instruction to attach the towrope.
- The Launch Point person asks the pilot to open the cable release hook with the word "Open" and when the ring is in place, he asks the pilot to close the release hook with the word "Close". The pilot will repeat the instructions to affirm.
- The Launch Point person checks the security of the tow rope attachment by pulling on the towrope. He then calls "On and secure" to the pilot, lets go of the towrope and walks to the port wingtip.
- The Launch Point person then checks for any potential conflicts with the launch and says to the pilot "all clear above and behind" \*\*
- The Launch Point person then signals to the tug to take up slack at the same time calling out to the pilot "Take up slack".
- The tug moves steadily forward. When the slack is removed from the towrope, the Launch Point person signals "All-Out" to the tug pilot.
- The wingtip holder runs with the wingtip, keeping the wings level and the glider straight until the pilot establishes sufficient aileron control to hold the wings level.
- \*\* If the glider is fitted with a radio then after the signal "all clear above and behind" the glider pilot may relay signals given by the wingtip holder to the tug pilot.

**Note.** During the initial part of the launch if anyone at the launch point gives a "STOP" signal the glider pilot will release the towrope immediately.

### ***Procedure for Concurrent Cable Launching and Aerotowing.***

A mixed launch operation is only feasible where an operating system can be developed to avoid any conflict between the two launch systems. Vital factors necessary to avoid conflict are: -

- The two launch points should be within view of one another
- If there is any risk of the aerotow overrunning the winch cables then the cables must be drawn into the winch before the aerotow commences.

## ***Landing Direction***

To avoid confusion by pilots in the circuit planning their approach and landing it is safer if all pilots conform to a simple set of rules. Obviously in the event of a launch failure or emergency these rules would not apply.

- It should be strongly discouraged that the landing direction is towards the cable run, unless by prior briefing.
- The approach should never over fly the cables.
- The landing when ever possible should be away and to one side of the cable run therefore minimizing the risk of damage to the gliders and occupants.
- Normally the cables are laid on one side of the runway in use. Ideally, when clear of other gliders and obstructions on the ground, the approach line should be between the cable run and the opposite boundary edge.
- As a general rule and to comply with air law aircraft should when ever possible land to the right of other landing aircraft or well to one side.
- To avoid conflict aircraft after landing should be taxied/towed back well to one side of the landing area whilst maintaining a clear distance from any cables.

## ***Circuits and General flying***

Good look out and airmanship is a minimum requisite for all pilots. The following list is a guide to the main points but any pilot seen to flying in an unsafe manner or displaying poor airmanship will at least be asked to undergo further two seat training or maybe grounded until the incident has being investigated.

- Avoid loitering above and around the winch area during flight
- All circuits must be completed at a safe height and final turn completed by not less than 300ft.
- Pilots in circuit must keep a constant look out for other aircraft, both gliders and power
- Where ever possible and not withstanding emergencies a pilot should always aim be in circuit before low key
- Thermalling below 600ft is not allowed by any pilot regardless of experience or type of glider

If the glider you are flying in is fitted with a radio then, if time permits, make a call on our standard frequency when down wind for circuit i.e. Shenington Gliders, Charlie – Charlie, down wind left hand. Remember if the workload is high due to weather conditions or height; ***aviate then communicate***.

## ***Medical requirements***

All visiting pilots who wish to fly solo must provide a copy of their current medical status.

## ***Rigging/De-rigging of Gliders***

In the interests of safety the following will apply when rigging or de- rigging gliders on the airfield.

- Rigging and de-rigging of gliders in trailer park area is not to be carried out while launches are taking place at the club house end if the cable is likely to fall in that area.
- Trailers should not be taken to the launch point and left there unless they are clearly not interfering with the flying operation. This particularly applies to the 8 acre area and by the caravans at the club house end of the airfield.
- Gliders must not be parked in the area occupied by the owner's caravans. It restricts movement in that area and creates a hazard in the case of ground run deviation, particularly in the case of an aerotow along the peri track.
- When parking gliders near the launch point always leave maximum clearance to allow for the manoeuvring of other aircraft .