

What the Ops Team is Talking About

Memo to Club CFI's and other interested parties - Oct 2019 - *please forward to your instructors.*
A summary of the key items discussed at the Ops Team on-line meeting on 20 October 2019.
David Moody (North), David Hirst (Central), Graham Erikson (South) and Martyn Cook (NOO).

1. Summary of Incident Reports for Sept-Oct 2019

- *I cannot release* aerotow exercise - bow developed in rope - weak link broke in gusty conditions
- winch launch - pilot opened canopy to check tail dolly had been removed - after taking up slack
- suggestion for a post-release check list - with specific reference to retracting the wheel

Commentary: The rope break on the *I cannot release* instructor-training exercise was a demo done by an instructor trainer, in which the glider was moved out to the side and the wings waggled. The conditions were gusty, and a bow developed on the way back to centre which snapped the weak link as the rope tightened. Glider returned to the field and dropped the rope without further incident.

The submitter pointed out that needing to apply this procedure would require a "double failure" in which the tow hook failed to release - and radio communication with the tug failed. Such double failure is considered highly improbable in the present operating environment. Furthermore, *"Now that we are aware that lateral tow upsets can have fatal consequences perhaps it is time to eliminate such a risky training exercise which prepares for an event unlikely to occur in practice."*

The Ops Team considered alternatives, such as by instructor demo only. Except that this event was an instructor demo, and the rope still got broken. Another possibility would be to treat the event the same as "loss of canopy" - in which the response would be described in training notes but not demonstrated or practised. Submitter proposes, *"Were we to find ourselves with both hook and radio failure I suggest we simply hang on. Do Nothing. Change our tow pilot procedures such that if they find a glider not releasing as expected then they should try to contact the glider. If no contact can be made they could safely assume the twin failure scenario, tow the glider back to the airfield and release."* Further submissions on this topic are invited - please email your ROO.

Regarding the winch launch event, clearly human factors are at play here. The pilot called "take up slack" and the glider crept forward a little as the tension came on. The pilot then called "stop, stop, stop" when he realised that he had forgotten to do the ABCD check before getting in, and was worried that the tail dolly might still be attached. The pilot opened the canopy (still with rope attached) and called out to the wing runner, "Is the tail dolly off?" The reply was, "Yes", and the pilot then closed the canopy and called, "All out, all out". The investigation noted that *"there was another glider on downwind for landing but the desire of the pilot to not delay the launch should not have overcome the rule of releasing the cable when calling a stop"*.

As we learn in Human Factors, *"the brain can only work towards one solution at a time, be it an action or a decision. That a person can achieve so many solutions seemingly at the same time is because the brain is very good at switching from one task to the next."* On the plus side, the time-honoured use of check lists helps to overcome this weakness. On the minus side, when distracted by a thought we can neglect important actions - like lowering the undercarriage or - in this case - releasing the cable to ensure that the winch launch could not proceed with an unprepared pilot.

The third report is more of an observation: that there are specific things to attend to just after release (examples given were wheel up, flap setting, trim) and that this check could be introduced from the first flight so the habit becomes embedded in long-term memory. Submitter contends this could prevent incidents where the wheel is retracted during pre-landing checks because it wasn't retracted after release.

2. Moodle Program Update

A Gliding NZ internal review of the moodle training program has been completed by a team of four instructors at Glide Omarama, and a copy of the review is attached for your information. The review supported the adoption of this program subject to 65 recommendations, two of which were regarded as critical (safe speed near the ground and target speed in the circuit).

The Panel believes this student-centric, internet based, expanded flight training programme should be adopted by Gliding NZ as it will be inspirational for future students, use modern technology and teaching methods and be more supportive for instructors, thereby helping GNZ meet its objectives of developing pilots who are safe, committed, capable of flying cross-county and likely to remain in the sport of gliding.

Of these 65 recommendations 64 have already been addressed and the remaining one - which involves reducing the complexity in one of the QGP Exam support papers - should be completed in a few days. The review team has now completed its work and is no longer engaged on this project. All further correspondence should be addressed to the GNZ Executive via David Hirst.

3. Club Audit Program

The Club audit program is up to date and all audit reports have been filed. A vote of thanks and appreciation to all involved - Club officers as well as auditors!

4. Instructor Currency in Smaller Clubs

The Ops Team has noticed with concern that a number of Clubs in both North and South Islands are struggling to achieve a level of training activity sufficient to maintain currency of their instructors. The team is very willing to provide assistance to any Club which asks for it. This could be organised to come from neighbouring Clubs, or by arranging help to run short courses. However, we do not wish to interfere with the autonomy of your Club - so you will need to put your hand up with any request.

5. Central Region Instructor Course Review

A number of observations were tabled in respect of the instructor training course held in September. The course was well-received by all who attended and will hopefully become an annual event. Instructor candidates were sometimes seen to be using too many words (or just talking too much) while in flight, and there was insufficient planning of some exercises prior to launch ("let's just go flying"). There is a need to improve the standard of instructor training, and the basic flying standard of some instructor candidates could have been a little higher.

6. Incident and Accident Reporting System

It was reported to the meeting that CAA is pretty satisfied with the way Gliding NZ is processing incident reports, and is adding this information to their statistical database. CAA does not receive the reports - only a summary in which the pilot and club cannot be identified. However, an invitation from CAA which appears to propose a one-stop reporting system - where incident as well as accident reports would go directly to CAA - was firmly rejected by the Ops Team.

This is because incidents are always emotionally-charged events and it is difficult enough for a glider pilot to file a report just to one's colleagues, even when it could result in a timely warning to others or perhaps a change in procedures. Reporting to CAA directly could shut off the flow of incident reports, which we rely upon heavily for continuous improvement.

7. Upcoming Instructor Training Courses

- Wellington Gliding Club: 16-22 December 2019, run by Andy Parish, up to 6 participants
- Nelson Region: Date to be confirmed, run by Graham Erikson