

**DAILY CLUB OPERATIONS ROUTINE**

**Aim:** To gain an understanding of daily routines associated with gliding club operations.

Clubs generally operate on weekends, public holidays and midweek by prior arrangement, particularly during the period of Daylight Saving. There are a minimum number of people required to get the operation going and once you have the necessary people, operations can get underway.

### **Pre-planning**

When are you free to go flying and how long can you be out at the field? You need to allow a couple of hours for any training / flying session. Avoid rushing so you are in the best frame of mind for your flying. Preparation will always be a key factor in achieving the aims you set for yourself. Is flying organised for the day? Check that the club are planning to fly and are not at an *away camp* at another flying site. Who is expected to be out at the field? Many clubs have a roster of volunteers to coordinate the people necessary to go flying. Check the roster and consider phoning the rostered Instructor and / or Duty Pilot to let them know you are wanting to fly. They will be able to offer advice on the suitability of the conditions for your level of experience / training. They will be able to discuss preparation for future training exercises so both you and the Instructor can be appropriately prepared. Check the weather forecasts and if it is expected to be fine, give them a call a day or two before just to confirm arrangements.

### **Suitable weather**

On the day, the first thing to check is that it is a suitable day for flying. Our weather conditions can vary greatly during a day so what may start out fine may not last or what starts off wet can be suitable by midday! The best conditions for learning in are those with little or no wind, good visibility with clearly defined horizons. Mornings are usually like this. Evenings are generally calmer as well so if out for an afternoon, waiting till the end of the day can often be well worthwhile as the winds die down and the air gets smoother. If it is wet and windy, you can save your money by not flying but do still consider a visit to the club to watch others and help out or to maybe get some *ground school* training in.

### **Setting up**

Given the voluntary nature of the sport, it is desirable to help either set up for flying or stay to help pack up at the end of the day. The earlier you arrive and help get organized for flying, the earlier you can get started and the more flying that can be done in any given day. Too often, the best part of the day for learning is missed because we have had a bit of a slow start to the day. As a rough guide, it takes about an hour to get set up for flying and you can get about 3 training flights done in one hour. Add to this some time for briefing and discussion before going flying and some debriefing afterwards and you can be actively involved for 3 hours from when you arrive at the field. Many clubs aim to start at between 0800 and 0900. (8am and 9 am) and gear themselves for training before the soaring conditions develop. Setting up begins with getting the gliders and equipment ready. Tasks to be done include:

Checking the airfield and airspace are available; any restrictions on use.

Opening up the hangar and clubrooms.

Preparing and positioning the base caravan:

Batteries fitted, radio checked, timesheets, pens, ballast weights, pickets, water for kettle.

Removing the gliders, towplane and / or winch / towcar and preparing them for use.

Cleaning, fitting batteries, checking equipment like pickets, ropes.

Completing Daily Inspections of each aircraft and tow vehicles.

Positioning gliders, vehicles & gear out on the airfield. (Drivers should be trained or under supervision)

Usually, a minimum of 3 people are needed to safely get aircraft out of a hangar and positioned out on the field.

To go flying, you need to have:

An Instructor

A Tow Pilot or winch / autocar driver

A wing runner / timekeeper / assistant.

***This is a bare minimum. Ideally, you have a few more members to help ensure things run smoothly.***

## The Flying List

A *flying list* is made to determine the order of flying so put your name on the list as early as possible. You will usually fly when your name comes up but there are occasions when the Instructor may elect to fly you earlier or later depending on the prevailing conditions so be ready to go if called early and don't be frustrated if delayed as it will be done with your best interests in mind. Once your turn comes, it is usual to do 2 or 3 flights as this offers the best training value. If conditions allow soaring, 1 flight may well be sufficient to cover enough exercises for the day. If you have a full day at the field, you may get a second session later in the day after you have had time to absorb the previous flights. The less time between flying sessions the better so if you can do a morning and an afternoon at the field each day of the weekend for a number of consecutive weekends, you will progress faster than dragging the training out over several months. Prepaid training is excellent for promoting this so ask about payment options that encourage you to do more flying.

## Flying operations

Once operations are underway, there are several ongoing tasks to be done to ensure things run smoothly, efficiently and safely. Gliders need assistance with launching and specific training will be given for doing this. The operations need to be co-ordinated and this is often easily achieved by nominating a "Duty Pilot" who will control the order gliders are launched and ask people to help with associated tasks. There will be a "Time keeper" to ensure flight times are logged and the base radio is monitored for communications with gliders and launch towplanes / winches / tow cars. Instructors will be briefing and debriefing pilots in between flying and students like you will want some time to prepare for a coming flight. All up, it can be a busy place. Teamwork and voluntary cooperation are critical to the enjoyment of everyone's time at the field.

## Packing up

Flying should be timed to finish so all equipment can be put away in daylight. This reduces the risk of losing equipment, leaving it lying out on the airfield, or damaging gliders and equipment manoeuvring them in poorly lit confined spaces like the hangar. Things to do include:

- Towing gliders and equipment back to the hangar. Put covers on.
- Refueling and hanging the towplane / winch / launch vehicles.
- Placing batteries on charge. Cleaning bugs and dirt off aircraft.
- Checking the timesheets are accurately completed. Getting you flying times.
- Closing and securing club facilities.

Instructors and experienced pilots will help you learn the various tasks listed above. Gliding is a team sport when it comes to getting the flying operations organized and running. Be involved; sharing the workload helps all enjoy the rewards of gliding. Ask if you are ever unsure of what can be done and how to do something.

## Paying for your flying

Check out the options for paying for your flying; many clubs have bulk flying schemes that provide excellent discounts for advanced payment or fixed costs till solo. All clubs prefer you to operate with an account in credit. They post out a statement each month detailing when you flew and how much it cost. Club budgets are pretty lean and can't tolerate bad debts or even late payments as the big bills like insurance and maintenance are paid in advance and fuel bills also require prompt payment... so don't treat your club as a bank and remember that your treasurer is a volunteer who does not want to have to chase you for bill payments. It helps to always check the flying time sheets to ensure the details are correct otherwise it is difficult to clarify discrepancies when your account arrives.

## Need To Know

- How to access club facilities and where to locate club equipment.
- What you can help with to ensure you do your share within this voluntary club operation.
- How to pay for your flying.



## Further Reading:

- Club Rules. Good all round info on specific administrative and operational rules at your club.