

What the Ops Team is Talking About . . .

Memo to Club CFI's and other interested parties - *please forward to all your instructors.*
A summary of the key items discussed at the Ops Team on-line meeting on 29 October 2020.
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1. Summary of Incident Reports for Sept-Oct 2020

- drifted back into cloud, blown back over ridge, exited cloud close to terrain, possible over-stress
- trial flight pax dropped phone into control stick well - no up-elevator for 30 seconds until retrieved
- wheel-up landing - rushed landing ahead of a rain squall, omitted pre-landing checks altogether
- airbrakes open on take-off, no pre-takeoff check, pilot believed DI was sufficient, not current
- bounce recovery exercise attempted on a short runway - hard landing then through electric fence
- undercarriage collapse on landing, faults later discovered in landing gear mechanism
- ASI pitot tubing not reconnected to instrument after avionics check - two separate aircraft
- ground tow in strong wind - unlatched front canopy blew open when glider turned across the wind
- tow pilot new to this gliding site breached controlled airspace on descent - inadequate briefing
- back-rest cable not re-connected after seat pan removal (by non-engineers) to fit straps
- last minute selection of alternate landing area because unable to identify other glider also landing

Commentary:

Being trapped in cloud generated by ridge or wave almost always ends in disaster - either the glider overspeeds and breaks up or the aircraft impacts terrain. In this case the occupants were extremely fortunate to emerge from cloud while clear of terrain, although they had to manoeuvre vigorously to avoid hitting the mountains. A successful outlanding was subsequently made on the lee side. The g-meter peaked at +7.5 and -2.5 in flight, attributed to a combination of severe lee turbulence and a high-speed pullout after a spin. An extensive engineering inspection was carried out but the glider appears undamaged. Be alert for drifting back over cloud and the possibility of sinking into it.

Loose objects in the cockpit is another area where continual vigilance is needed. In this case a cell phone carried by the front occupant jammed the controls until eventually wrested free. Could have been more serious, especially if it had happened close to the ground or on landing.

Check lists are often omitted or done cursorily under even mild stress. This pilot was in a hurry to land and failed to lower the wheel. An interesting twist is that the pilot had been making good use of "Condor" during lockdown, but not doing pre-landing checks when performing circuits on the simulator. This "un-training" means that checks are easily omitted when flying a real glider. The best advice is to do everything on a simulator that you would do in a real glider - and nothing that you wouldn't. It's all about self-discipline and training the brain.

The Daily Inspection is about establishing the serviceability of the glider. The Pre-Takeoff checks are about configuring the aircraft for flight and rehearsing eventualities that might occur during the launch. In this case there was a delay between placing the glider on the launch grid and taking off, and being post-lockdown there was socialising and chatter. All the more reason for the pilot to insist on a "sterile field" around the aircraft while getting in and finally preparing to launch.

2. Club Audit Program: Audits are due for Auckland, Kaikohe, ATC, Taupo, Nelson, Marlborough and Glide Omarama in the near future.

3. Medical Requirements for Aging Pilots: After review of feedback and further research the Ops Team will recommend to the Exec that pilots over 70 years of age who wish to carry passengers or provide flight instruction should be required to pass a medical to the DL-9 standard every two years, not annually as previously reported.

4. Use of Motor Gliders for Field Landing Training: It was reported that over Labour weekend the two Dimona motor gliders in NZ together provided a significant number of training flights to pilots preparing for their XCP rating: one at a cross-country course at Matamata and the other at the Youthglide mini-camp at the Greytown Soaring Centre. Positive feedback from trainee pilots.

5. Club Survival and Development: Ops Team members all expressed concern that some gliding clubs in NZ could be facing oblivion. The reasons are complex but the basic problem is that insufficient younger pilots are being trained and developed to the point where they are taking over from older members who are wishing to retire. A second reason is that instructors are not being trained in sufficient numbers to take over from the ageing instructors.

The larger clubs, by contrast, are vigorously engaged in both pilot and instructor training, and are naturally growing. The new pilot training program is playing some role in making training easier and more efficient, and the Youthglide movement is certainly fostering the development of younger pilots, but while these contributions are helpful they are not sufficient. Some Youthglide members have reported a less-than-wholesome reception when returning to their local club, which does not auger well for the future.

It was agreed that there needs to be an emphasis on "club building" and perhaps a plan to support clubs who wish to build themselves up rather than fade away. Pilots who can work alongside buddies their own age seems to be a helpful element. There appears to be a shortage of members in the 40-60 age group in these smaller clubs willing to step up into positions of responsibility.

Contact your ROO if your club either wants further support or is willing to offer it to neighbouring clubs.

6. New Email Addresses: All correspondence to the Ops Team should in future pass through the Gliding NZ accounts as follows:

Northern Region ROO	northern.roo@gliding.co.nz
Central Region ROO	central.roo@gliding.co.nz
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