

What the GNZ Operations Team is Talking About . . .

A summary of key items discussed at the Operations Team on-line meeting on 19 April 2022.

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1. Incident Reports for March - April 2022

- airbrakes opened on winch launch - checks were interrupted by question from trainee in front
- rear canopy opened on aerotow takeoff - instructor reopened canopy to speak to ATC cadets
- in thermal near cloud base - glider silhouette observed in cloud directly above and at close range
- fatal crash onto low ridge shortly after launch - CAA investigating - possibly stall/spin

Commentary on Selected Incidents:

Pre-Takeoff Checks Interrupted: Two recent incidents highlight how easy it is to fail the checklist. In the first instance the trainee in front asked the instructor a question about airbrakes as that item was being checked. The experienced instructor paused the check sequence to explain and demonstrate the "brakes" item, but cannot be sure that the brakes were fully locked again afterwards. It's also possible that the knee of the trainee prevented the brakes from being locked. The brakes opened part of the way up the winch launch. After release the instructor recognised that the brakes were open and closed them.

In the second instance the instructor was watching a group of ATC cadets manoeuvring a glider nearby while preparing to launch. After completing the pre-takeoff checks he opened the rear canopy to speak with them. The instructor then closed the rear canopy and hooked on, and "must have missed closing the canopy latch". When it opened on takeoff the pilot caught the canopy and secured it before any damage was done.

Both these incidents underline the human vulnerability to being interrupted. The Pilot Manual for Checklists recommends that "all pilots insist on a *sterile bubble* from the moment they climb into the cockpit and commence preparation for flight. No more than one person should be permitted in the area forward of the wings. This person is available to help with finding straps or stowing articles otherwise should remain still and silent until asked to hook on. The pilot can then fully concentrate on completing all the checks." Obviously the inflight checks are already in a sterile bubble, but the pre-boarding and pre-takeoff checks are carried out on the ground where distraction is possible.

The other point, which has been recently addressed by the re-issue of AC 2-12, is that any group of young people on the gliding field needs to be actively supervised at all times by a competent gliding person - so that an instructor sitting in the cockpit does not need to attend to both inside and out.

Flying Near Cloud Base: In this instance the pilot climbing in a thermal and nearing cloud base became aware of the shadow of a glider in the cloud immediately above. It was described as similar to the shadow of a shark passing under a small boat. Despite being a contest flight the cloud-flying glider was not identified. Similar "close encounters" have been recalled by a number of pilots.

It has further been observed that some pilots will take an "extra turn" after reaching cloud base, based on having intermittent visibility of the ground to remain oriented. There are two hazards with this practice: the first is that the glider may not be visible to a glider climbing underneath, and the second is that the lower glider would likely be in the blind spot of the upper glider.

A third hazard is that the higher glider flitting in and out of cloud may suddenly descend and drop onto a glider flying below. It has happened, notably flying along a ridge. And finally, to enter cloud at the top of a thermal while competing in a contest is surely a very rash move, knowing that other gliders will be flying the same course and climbing in the same thermals.

The rules for flying in or near cloud are identified in the Pilot Training Program under *To XCP / Aviation Law*, and summarised in MOAP Section 2.7. General cloud flying rules are covered in the Civil Aviation Rules (CAR) Part 91.301 *Meteorological Minima under Visual Flight Rules (VFR)*. Below 3,000 feet a glider must remain clear of cloud and in sight of the surface. This lower limit can be raised if the glider is less than 1,000 feet above the terrain, as in mountain flying. Above these heights and altitudes the general rule is 1,000 feet below cloud.

Part 104 then modifies Part 91 to give some concessions for gliders. CAR Part 104.55 allows the pilot of a glider, above an altitude of 3,000 ft and above a height (above terrain) of 1,000 ft, but below an altitude of 11,000 ft, to fly no closer than 500 ft below cloud within uncontrolled airspace.

The view of the Ops Team is that climbing a glider into cloud to the point where the glider cannot be clearly seen by a glider below is not only against the Rules but also presents a situation where the risk of collision far exceeds the small benefit of the extra height gained.

Do you need to file an OPS-10 as well as CA005? This question comes up a lot. The CAA must be notified immediately by phone after an "accident", along with the relevant CFI (MOAP Ref page 61 & 62). A Form CA005 *Occurrence Report* must then be filed with CAA within ten days.

The view of Gliding NZ is that every incident or accident is also an opportunity to learn something that could prevent a similar occurrence in the future, and for this reason an OPS-10 report should also be filed with the ROO even though this is not explicitly requested in AC 2-08.

2. Instructor Training Program Update

A meeting was held between Gliding NZ and the Civil Aviation Authority on 13 April to discuss the proposed GNZ Instructor Training Program which had been suspended nine months earlier. The CAA was under the impression that this was a whole new program, rather than an update. As it happens, GNZ has closely followed the pilot and instructor training programs published by the British Gliding Association (BGA) since at least the 1970's, and the current draft of the Instructor Training Program is an update based on the 2018 version of the BGA Instructor Manual, with some amendments to suit established practice in NZ.

Some helpful clarification was provided to enable GNZ to work with established Document Control procedures. This will involve some rewriting of material to produce a specification for pilot and instructor training. A schedule will need to be written for a formal Flight Test for XCP, which did not exist in the past.

3. Fit-and-Proper Person Requirements

There is provision in the PTP for issuing a passenger rating prior to completing the last item in the XCP check list (50 km flight), but the ability to carry a passenger requires that the pilot meets the "Fit-and-Proper-Person" (FPP) requirement in the [Civil Aviation Act 1990](#). Currently this is done by a declaration on the XCP application form.

GNZ could add the FPP requirement to the list of conditions for exercising a passenger rating without completing the last item on the XCP checklist. Alternatively, we could delete the provision for exercising a passenger rating prior to completing the XCP.

The current provision was made to allow for clubs who believed that a 50 km flight was not possible from their site, and therefore discriminated against pilots who just wanted a passenger rating. This has turned out to be less of an issue than originally thought, because some of those clubs are finding that cross-country flights are possible after all, plus there is the option of making a 50 km flight from another gliding site.

It was mentioned that some trainees are keen to obtain a passenger rating to "show off" to friends and family - but are not completely committed to the discipline of cross-country flight. Yet another view was that even on a "local" flight there is still the possibility of an outlanding, so demonstrated cross-country proficiency is very relevant to a passenger rating. The concluding view of the Ops Team was that the current provision for exercising a passenger rating prior to completing the full XCP syllabus should be dropped. Please contact your ROO if you have a view on this.

4. No Medical Required

A senior instructor recently pointed out that should a pilot choose not to take passengers and not to instruct then they never need submit another medical declaration after the initial, pre-solo one. The suggestion was that the "date next medical due" be included on the BFR form.

The response from GNZ was that the absolute minimum is a medical declaration on Form OPS-01, with the accompanying need to declare any changes of health that may affect that declaration. It has been this way for 50+ years, and was originally modelled on the BGA self-declaration. However, if you are instructing or carrying passengers, your medical will have a validity period depending on age. Reference MOAP Appendix 2-A on page 75.

Once the updated ITP is in place the format for BFR and ICR forms will be reviewed. At that stage a review of medical status vs. the pilot's intended activity in the next 2 years could be included.

5. Suspension of PiC Privileges - update

GNZ was advised that only the Director of CAA is authorised to suspend or revoke the flying privileges of a pilot, and that this applies to any privilege, not just the formal "licence" (which for gliding would be the XCP Certificate). This means that any person who is concerned that a fellow pilot is "an accident waiting to happen" would need to apply to the CAA directly, although the current proposal is to filter this through the Ops Team first to ensure the case is genuine and fair. GNZ has been assured by CAA that such application would be attended to promptly.

It remains to be clarified on what legal basis a gliding instructor can suspend privileges that have already been granted. It's not uncommon to "ground" a pilot for a flagrant breach of the rules or a display of poor airmanship. It has also been accepted practice to temporarily suspend a pilot's solo privileges and impose a period of further dual instruction where a particular issue has needed to be addressed. There are also situations where the Duty Instructor needs to authorise certain flights on the day, but this relates to the granting of a privilege rather than its removal, so less of an issue.

6. Current Version of MOAP - Electronic Version Acceptable

The OPS-15 Audit Report form requires the auditor to check that *"any hard-copy versions of the MOAP, ACs or Forms available to members on site are up to date"*. As clubs move to more information being available on-line, the Ops Team recommends that a current version of the MOAP in electronic form be acceptable in lieu of a paper copy. This would not conflict with the existing wording in the OPS-15 Audit Form.

For a club with internet access on the airfield then the club representative would need to know how to locate these documents from the Gliding NZ web site. For a club without internet access it would be required that the current version of the MOAP, AC's and other forms be available in hard copy or on an electronic device on the airfield.

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