

What the GNZ Operations Team is Talking About . . .

A summary of key items discussed at the Operations Team on-line meeting on 30 January 2023. David Moody (North), David Hirst (Central), Wal Bethwaite (South) and Martyn Cook (NOO).

1. Incident Reports for December 2022 - January 2023

- ground loop after landing on part of airfield with longer grass than in other places, minor damage
- nose wheel on twin jammed against fairing after heavy landing on nosewheel, grass debris inside
- airspace incursion on cross-country flight, transgressed while chasing a thermal, CA005 filed
- gear collapsed on outlanding, towards end of landing roll, glider had jumped a small depression
- airbrakes opened at end of aerotow, pilot admits to rushed pre-flight checks with towplane waiting
- grid rage by angry person after Duty Instructor attempted to rearrange the launch order
- freshly-grazed field chosen for outlanding proved to be very rough due recent removal of stumps
- glider and parachute drop accidentally cleared into same airspace - ATC procedures under review

Commentary on Selected Incident Reports

1.1 Interruption when Preparing for Flight: CHAOTIC is used in some countries overseas as a pre-launch mnemonic. Not in New Zealand. In fact, any kind of chaos at the launch point is a serious safety issue because it interferes with the careful and systematic preparation that is required. In one incident reported above the very experienced glider pilot reported that "preparation and takeoff was rushed . . . with the towplane waiting." As a result the airbrakes were closed but not locked, and they popped open on aerotow just prior to release. This was noticed by both glider and tug pilots, and the airbrakes were quickly closed. Tow pilots and launch point controllers need to respect the need for calm and unrushed preparation prior to flight.

1.2 Abusive Behaviour at Launch Point: A pilot not intending to fly on the day, and not managing the launch operation, objected to gliders further back in the launch queue being pulled forward into a second launch line. Tow planes were available. This move was to allow those who wanted to launch on training flights to do so while other pilots chose to wait on the ground until soaring conditions improved. No pilot higher up the launch queue objected - they either agreed with the reshuffle or were not present and ready with their gliders. The OPS-10 report states that the abusive language was so aggressive and intimidating that "one pilot was left in a state of not being fit to fly, this status only being determined after their tow commenced."

1.3 Airspace Incursion: Controlled airspace is a very rigid system - it has to be to protect fare-paying passengers on commercial flights. Glider pilots are privileged to be able to make use of it, but we need to demonstrate that we can do this competently if we are to retain this access. To his credit, this pilot owned up straight away and filed a report with CAA. The second incident report appears to have been the result of a mis-communication between the local tower and the area controller, in clearing both a towplane and a parachute jump plane into the same airspace at about the same time. The glider pilot attempted to remain clear of the PDA after release but the conditions were not soarable. He communicated by radio that he "could not comply" and was guided in to land while remaining clear of the parachutes. The glider pilot is to be commended for his response and renegotiating his clearance - despite the mistake made by others.

1.4 Landing Surface Not Benign: In one case the pilot landed on an area of the home airfield with long grass, and did not make use of an area that had been mowed. In the second, an outlanding, the field "looked good from the air" but was scattered with mounds, occasional stumps and half-rotten logs. After a firm landing the glider bounced vigorously on the rough terrain, bouncing worse as the glider slowed down. Then the main wheel dug in causing the tail to rise and rotate through 90 degrees. The rear undercarriage struts were both deformed and needed to be replaced.

2. Instructor Competency Standards

A simple "road map" to the Instructor Training Program is available [here](#). There are two check list forms to capture satisfactory assessment of the candidate by the instructor trainer: The OPS-07 (page 2) and the OPS-08.

Regional Operations Officers have made a review of their individual competencies in order to identify areas that "need work". It is hoped to get the entire Operations Team up to A-Cat standard within a few months.

One issue that did arise concerns the "body of knowledge" that a competent instructor needs to get their head around. Some people are put off by lots of written text and would prefer to learn by listening and interacting with others, rather than by reading. The variation in preferred learning styles is well understood and indeed forms part of the "theory of learning" included in the instructor training program. So what are the alternatives?

One club reported holding a "group learning session" which seemed to be very successful. The senior instructors sat together and worked through the "road map" and linked documents, discussing each point in turn. Perhaps more clubs will find this an effective and enjoyable approach. More than one day will be required, of course, but it's a great start.

Finally, a reminder that regional seminars for instructors will be scheduled after the end of the contest season.

3. Honest Conversations

There is anecdotal evidence of one or two pilots crossing over to another club in the hope of passing a BFR that had been denied them by their home club. Likewise, a different report of a pilot shopping around different medical practitioners in order to obtain a "fitness to fly" clearance.

While a second opinion is sometimes useful, and anyone can make a mistake or overly-harsh judgement, such actions may indicate a stubborn denial of declining medical fitness or piloting proficiency. It's really hard for any one of us to accept that our physical health or cognitive ability will eventually preclude us from flying as P1. There's nothing like an honest conversation among colleagues to encourage such a pilot to face the facts.

Having said that, ageing pilots who have voluntarily chosen to give up instructing, or even flying as P1, could still be encouraged to stay active within their club. Such persons could give a lot of moral and practical support to younger members - both instructors and administrators.

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