

What the GNZ Operations Team is Talking About . . .

A summary of key items discussed at the Operations Team on-line meeting on 13 August 2024. David Moody (North), Roy Innes (Auckland), David Hirst (Central), Wal Bethwaite (South) and Martyn Cook (NOO).

1. Incident Reports for July - August 2024

- training flight, trainee turned off runway while rolling too fast, glider slewed sideways
- single seater, undercarriage collapsed after about 10 metres of landing roll

Further Details on Selected Incidents (extracted from the original OPS-10 reports)

1.1 Trainee turned off the grass runway just after landing: The aircraft was still rolling fast on the ground, and the turn caused the glider to slide sideways. The instructor reported that ‘it happened so fast that I had no time to stop him from doing it, or correct it’. There was grass and soil on the side of the main wheel and on the wing tip. A heavy landing inspection was carried out iaw Tech-22 and no damage was found.

Even though it may not have been a contributing factor, experienced pilots have been observed to turn the glider after landing, either to clear the runway or to move towards a parking area. This sets an example for other pilots to follow. However, such a manoeuvre can be difficult to execute well, and requires a good sense of timing. Even worse is where the glider is pointed towards an obstacle, like a fence, hangar or tie-down spot, and the pilot completely relies on the wheel brake to bring the glider to a stop. There have been occasions where the wheel brake has failed and significant damage done to the glider. Experienced pilots are encouraged to set a good example by landing straight ahead and keeping the glider straight until coming to rest.

1.2 Main wheel collapsed during landing roll: The pilot was becoming familiar with a newly-acquired single seater, and was on his seventh flight on this aircraft. He definitely remembers doing the pre-landing checks, including ‘undercart down and locked’. He landed long to end up close to the hangar. The undercart collapsed after about 10 metres of ground roll.

On reflection the pilot admits that the gear lever may not have been in the fully locked position. ‘It needs to go forward and be pushed sideways into a slot to be locked.’

Other possibilities will be checked during the up-coming annual inspection, including the pressure in the gas strut used to keep the undercarriage locked down. Gas struts can lose pressure slowly over time. This is easily detected on struts which hold canopies open, but may be less obvious on undercarriages.

2. Advice on Circuit Speed and Safe Speed Near the Ground:

The Ops Team has been alerted by an instructor panel to an inconsistency in the Pilot Training Program in regard to teaching speed in the circuit and speed when flying close to the ground.

The tricky statement is “Approach Speed = Yellow triangle + Pilot margin + Conditions margin”. This statement is not consistent with statements in other parts of the PTP, nor is it consistent with advice given in comparable gliding countries like Australia, UK and USA.

The Ops Team recognises that there are different views on what constitutes a safe speed near the ground (SSNG). It is acknowledged that speed in the circuit, speed on final approach and SSNG may be similar but are not identical - each is subtle in its own way. What is common to all is that there needs to be a margin above the stall speed, and that the presence of wind and gusts (or wind shear) requires an increase in that speed margin.

There are different views on a suitable size for the margin. The Ops Team will review information in the PTP and use the ‘minor change’ provision to bring existing advice into a consistent format.

3. Powered Glider Training Module

Training material for the powered glider rating was not incorporated into the current PTP at the time it was developed, because training check lists (ground and airborne) already existed. There was also a briefing paper and an exam available.

A GNZ instructor issuing a powered glider rating recently notified the Ops Team that a few of the exam questions are in need of updating. Some terminology describing airspace is no longer used. In some cases the correct multi-choice answer is not clearly distinguished from the alternatives.

The same instructor has also proposed a number of additional questions, many relating to the operation of a Touring Motor Glider. Such aircraft have much in common with a power plane, so some power plane knowledge is desirable, such as taxiing in a strong wind, minimum fuel reserves, centre-of-gravity calculations for different loading configurations and circuit joining at an uncontrolled aerodrome. Roy Innes has kindly agreed to review all existing documents.

4. Renewal of Gliding NZ's Part 149 Certificate

Gliding NZ's certificate to operate as a Part 149 organisation has recently been audited. The audit, conducted by the Civil Aviation Authority, was focused on checking that GNZ complied with applicable sections of the Civil Aviation Act. This meant checking that our documentation (the Exposition, MOAP, AC's, PTP, etc) complied the requirements of the Act, and the Civil Aviation Rules that are derived from that. And a check that clubs were complying with this documentation.

We have yet to receive the final report. However, it did become clear during the audit that the standard of documentation in some clubs is less than the expected standard. Of particular concern was the paucity of information recorded in some pilot log books. The very first item in the PTP is '*Logbook and Training Record*' and there's a very good reason for this. It's important in aviation.

For those A-Cat instructors engaged in training new instructors, and preparing existing instructors for upgrades, it is very helpful to log all supervision and training events – not just time spent in the cockpit. As a general principle, 'If it isn't recorded, then it didn't happen'. And the best place to record it is in the pilot's (or trainee instructor's) log book.

A-Cat Instructors could usefully keep a personal diary of their supervision sessions with trainee instructors. These notes could later be summarised on page 2 of the *OPS-07 Application for Issue or Upgrade of Instructor Rating* to provide supporting evidence of attendance at training seminars, discussions on the ground about specific topics, etc.

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