

What the GNZ Operations Team is Talking About . . .

A summary of key items discussed at the Operations Team on-line meeting on 5 November 2024. David Moody (North), Roy Innes (Auckland), David Hirst (Central), Wal Bethwaite (South) and Martyn Cook (NOO).

1. Incident Reports for September - October 2024

- second trial flight for trainee, rear canopy not latched, flew off on ground roll and broke
- glider launched with front-hinged canopy unlatched – checks were done out of sequence
- glider wing tip damaged while on ground tow - tip collided with launch point caravan
- undercarriage lowered when very close to ground due to distractions, no pre-landing checks

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

1.1 Rear canopy flew off on ground roll: The instructor was seated in the glider and explaining the pre-launch checks to the trainee. During this process the rear canopy was closed but not locked.

Before the checks were complete, and without being asked, the wing man attempted to connect the tow rope. The instructor waved him off, asking him to wait until the checks had been completed (thereby interrupting the check sequence).

The instructor did not push up on the canopy to check it was locked, stating it was a long way forward to reach. The canopy opened, flew off, impacted the fin and shattered the perspex.

The investigation report identified the 'non-sterile cockpit area' as a contributing factor. An eager-to-help wing man is not helpful. At least one club uses the practice of the pilot calling 'Ready' after the checks are complete. Only then does the launch sequence begin and the cable get connected.

1.2 The last item on the check list gets skipped over: Same incident. The submitter wryly observed that

'the check list was changed from CEB to BEC because air-brakes were being left unlocked. It's been suggested that leaving the brakes unlocked is better than not locking the canopy. The air-brakes can be locked without incident, but once the canopy is gone it's a reasonably costly repair to fix.'

The Ops Team considered this observation carefully and concluded that all the reasons for putting 'canopy closed and locked' as the final check item remained valid. Human attention is extremely fickle - interrupting the check sequence could have been a contributing factor. It's also important to avoid 'skipping ahead' onto the next item before fully completing the item currently being checked.

A further suggestion is to make a habit of locking the canopy whenever closing it from the inside. Unfortunately, hatches in common use elsewhere (such as car doors) latch automatically when closed, but glider canopies do not. Did anyone ever ask, "Why not?"

The proposal to add an inconsequential sacrificial item to the end of the check list (e.g. adjust boom microphone) was briefly considered but will not be followed up.

2. Minor Changes to Pilot Training Program

2.1 Safe Speed Near the Ground

As previously advised, the section in the PTP on 'safe speed near the ground' has been reviewed by the Ops Team, and commentary on this topic has been consolidated into a single document. This can be found under To Solo > Minimum Speed, Unusual Attitude > Safe Speed Near the Ground.

Specific references to safe speed in other parts of the PTP have been removed to ensure consistent treatment. 'Circuit speed' and 'safe speed when ridge soaring' have been addressed separately.

2.2 Winch Launch Consolidation

The Pilot Manual describing Winch Launching has been divided into two parts. Part 1 covers the basic procedures relevant to a pilot working towards their first solo flight, and can be found at To Solo Pilot > Launch By Winch > Normal Launch > Pilot Manual Part 1.

Part 2 is filed under To Soaring Pilot > Launch Review and Consolidation > Winch Launch Part 2. This document addresses some of the more subtle aspects of safe winch launching, and provides a guide to the topic of *Winch Launch Consolidation*.

The link to the *Winch Launching Manual* published by Gliding Australia has been updated to the latest version (Issue 7) and remains as recommended reading.

2.3 Eventualities Check List

The objective of these lists (WASOB and SASOB) is to keep them very brief, and sharply focused on eventualities known to be most critical in terms of avoiding fatal crashes.

To this end the 'B for Break' item in the winch check list has been shortened to:

Adopt the Recovery Attitude, Wait [for the approach speed], No Airbrakes or Turns

This document is filed under To Solo > Aircraft Handling > Cockpit Check Lists > Eventualities. The *Recovery Attitude* is clearly described in Part 1 of the Pilot Manual - Winch Launch.

3. Club Audits and Record Keeping

In their roles as club auditors the ROO's make Recommendations, express Concerns and generate Findings. Our gliding clubs have a range of attitudes to these audits. The majority see them as necessary evils to be tolerated before they can go back to their normal operations.

However, it has been noted that a small number of clubs are not responding to these findings from one audit to the next. Their operations are not unsafe - it's the requirement to keep accurate records that has not been satisfactorily addressed. This includes keeping Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) and Emergency Plans up to date, and maintaining accurate Pilot records (BFR's and Medicals).

We know that record-keeping is not appealing to some people, but others do actually enjoy the sense of order that accurate record-keeping provides. If your club is having a problem then try and identify a member (or their partner) that loves orderliness, and assign them the task. It doesn't have to be the President, or the CFI, or even the Treasurer.

The Ops Team strongly recommends that the Gliding NZ database is used for filing all Pilot records, ratings and achievements. This database is very easy to use, and a lot of work has gone into its development and refinement. Log in at www.gliding.net.nz and ask for help if you need it.

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