

31 March 2010

Dear all

Latest EASA challenge – NO MORE RIDGE SOARING AS WE KNOW IT

Please note the following. Gordon Dennis has summarised it as follows. If any of this went through then more or less forget our type of operation.

Please follow the links and make your feelings known!

I'm sure you are aware of this document as a letter about it went out from the BGA on March 12th headed "A Significant Threat to Gliding"

Consultation ends on April 12th and it has some very restrictive stuff in it, e.g:

"This Regulation shall enter into force on the 20th day following its publication in the Official Journal of the European Union.

2. It shall apply from [4th December 2012].

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States."

So it becomes EU Law at the end of 2012

"3.1.2 Minimum Heights

*"3.1.2.1 ----- The minimum heights for VFR flights shall be those specified in 4.6 --
-----.*

"4.6 Except when necessary for take-off or landing, or except by permission from the competent authority, a VFR flight shall not be flown: ----

b) at a height less than 150 m (500 ft) above the ground."

Bye bye ridge soaring!

"A VFR flight operating within or into areas or along routes designated by the competent authority, in accordance with 3.3.1.2 b)ii) or b)iii), shall maintain continuous air-ground voice communication watch on the appropriate communication channel of, and report its position as necessary to, the air traffic services unit providing flight information service."

So I wasn't far wrong about RT!

3.2.6.1 An aircraft operated on or in the vicinity of an aerodrome shall: ----

c) make all turns to the left, when approaching for a landing and after taking off, unless otherwise indicated, or instructed by ATC;

Interesting when approaching our 23 from the north! As with a lot of this document, it's a bit open to interpretation

"3.3.1.2 A flight plan shall be submitted prior to operating: ----

b) any VFR flight or portion thereof:

i) to be provided with air traffic control service;

ii) planned to operate within or into areas or along routes designated by the competent authority, to facilitate the provision of flight information, alerting and search and rescue services;"

Can't see this being practical or even possible with glider flights; really restrictive. This section goes on much further.

EUROCONTROL PROPOSALS - STANDARDISED EUROPEAN RULES OF THE AIR 15th March 2010 (extract from BGA)

This news item requests action by clubs and members in response to a significant threat. It is a different issue from the other European regulatory proposals that currently concern us.

Eurocontrol, the 'European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation' is currently consulting on its proposed Standardised European Rules of the Air. Given the nature of the proposals, we are asking that as many glider pilots as possible take the time to respond in order to highlight our very significant concerns.

As the name implies, the proposals seek to unify rules of the air across Europe by cancelling all agreed national differences from current ICAO standards. This will result in the removal of decades of appropriate and sensible national modifications and differences to the ICAO Rules of the Air. These national differences – as seen for example in the UK ANO and in the series of exemptions put in place by UK CAA - are appropriate and safe. The safety, operational and economic impact associated with inappropriate Standardised European Rules of the Air is likely to be significantly damaging to gliding.

- normal gliding flight would be classed as aerobatic and would, therefore, be prohibited unless specific permissions were obtained
- no more field landing training in motor gliders
- no more ridge soaring, as we know it
- the potential closure of unlicensed aerodromes
- having to file flight plans with ATC

If established, these rules would affect all pilots from 2012.

While the BGA will be responding directly and in detail to Eurocontrol, you can hopefully understand why the BGA feels that it is necessary to ask as many glider pilots as possible to respond personally to this consultation, so that the regulators are left in no doubt about why these proposals are unacceptable.

Please take the time to familiarise yourself with the issues and, if you care for the future of our sport, please respond to the consultation which closes on April 12th.

Resources and How to Respond

1. **An open letter from the BGA Chief Executive** which provides background and analysis of the issues.
2. Look through the **draft detailed air sports issues**. These include many issues for gliding.
3. Look through the Eurocontrol consultation information **here**
4. Please respond using the Eurocontrol 'Consultation Response Sheet – Enclosure 3' **here** - noting;
 - You are asked to state which organisation you are from. Unless you are representing a specific organisation, you could state 'Glider Pilot'
 - You are asked to state your position (within the organisation). Unless you are representing a specific organisation, you could state 'Pilot'
 - If you can sign and scan the document, then fine. If not, you could note your name and 'electronic signature' in the signature block and then submit the form electronically as an attachment to an email that is attributable to you. We believe that this constitutes an electronic signature.

You must respond in your own words – cut and paste responses are ignored. Please send your completed comments to Eurocontrol before the closing date of **12th April 2010.**

The final BGA response will be published here.

As you can see it could have a huge impact on our operation. Please take the time to respond.

Annual Flight Review 2010

The Annual Flight Reviews have already started.

I have updated the list of names that are due and put it in order of those who will be due first

The list is on the wall opposite the office, in the Duty Instructor folder and eventually on the daily briefing slides

Any pilot that goes beyond the end of the month they are due, cannot fly solo until having completed an AFR first

If you are doing a currency flight please try and take it one step further and turn it into an AFR. It doesn't matter if it is early

- If you are a country member then we need the date of your last annual check/review. Hopefully you included it recently on your membership form. If you haven't had one or can't provide a date then one will be required at Talgarth.

Lookout

Having flown with many club pilots and visitors over the years the quality of the P2 lookout can vary considerably.

Stating the obvious but you must maintain a very good lookout.

- maintain regular scan of the full field of view, both above and below the horizon as well as on it, pausing from time to time.
- Most of you look before you turn, far less look before they level the wings rolling out
- Most of you look into the circuit far less look out

Be warned. If you are flying with an instructor be it pre-solo, currency, AFR, site check etc and the lookout was inadequate then you may well not be able to fly solo until your lookout is up to standard.

- As a basic rule of thumb. If an object does not seem to move across your field of view it is on a collision course
- Constant bearing = constant danger
- Aircraft / glider heading straight towards you

Stall/Spin training

- Feedback on national accidents shows the stall/spin related accident rate increasing. Most will result in serious injury or death.
- Most of these accidents are due to the pilot getting distracted (late field selection, low pull up off competition finish, low final turn onto approach etc) and missing or not recognising the symptoms of the approaching stall or spin
- Please take every opportunity you can to practice and give yourself exposure to this very important but rarely practiced area of your flying.
- I also encourage you to practice in your own glider if cleared to do solo (check with the duty instructor first if you have not spun your glider solo before).
- You may know that the vast majority of single seaters will stall/spin far more readily than our K13's or K21. You must fully understand and appreciate the symptoms, prevention and recovery of the glider you fly solo so that you can take appropriate action when it is needed through the 'fog of distraction'

Airspace / Navigation

- Do make sure you understand the symbols on a chart, what they mean and what to do
- Do make sure you can accurately navigate using both chart and GPS
- Do check the NOTAMS
- Do make sure you understand the difference between QFE/QNH/1013
- Do not go cross country or anywhere near the airway when in wave unless you understand the above for sure

Nationally there are way too many airspace infringements which just add weight to the regulation argument

Friends/Family

As a reminder the renewal requirement is:

- Good Annual Flight Review
- 20 hours and 20 flights as P1 (Oct 08 to Sept 09 and for this year Oct 09 to Sept 10)
- Medical – as required for Basic Instructors (see below)
- <http://www.gliding.co.uk/bgainfo/medical.htm>

Thanks to those who sent through their hours for 2009

If you have not met the requirements above and/ or have not sent me your hours/flights declaration then your friends/family clearance is suspended

Weather minima are there same as it is for trial lessons:

DO NOT:

- • Launch into cloud
- • Launch in rain, or if the flight is likely to be in flown in rain.
- • Launch with rain/snow/ice on the gliders flying surfaces
- • Launch with misted canopy.
- **DO SEEK ADVICE FROM THE INSTRUCTOR IN-CHARGE BEFORE LAUNCHING IF:**
- • The wind is turbulent. (Varying by more than 10 kts).
- • The wind is strong (> 20 kts)
- • Cloudbase is less than 1200'
- • Flight visibility is less than 5km
- • Launching above more than 4/8th cloud

Always check with the duty instructor first

Canopies

The Pirat canopy was recently damaged. It was closed but not locked. The tug started up with the slip stream blowing open the canopy.

The canopy 'strap' gave way under the strain and smash – one broken canopy.

Luckily Keith was able to repair it. If he hadn't then it could have written off the glider as the cost of a replacement canopy is far greater than the glider itself!

Moral of the story

- Never leave a canopy open un-guarded
- Always lock the canopy when it is closed

Rock Polishers (Sat 29th – Sun30th May)

The K21 and Mike Tomlinson have been entered into rock polishers

There is still one day available

Please contact me or Liz if interested

Simulator

The simulator is near completion and ready for evaluation.

Is there anyone that would like to get involved?

- It would involve spending some time 'flying' the simulator on set exercises and feeding back your thoughts. I envisage the exercise to be something different and interesting as well as challenging your handling skills flying a new (virtual) glider.

Eventually I would like a team of simulator instructors – they would train the basics and enable P2's to use the sim for practice under supervision.

- Again something different and interesting for those of you looking at developing your skills. If you would be interested in getting involved with either idea's then please let me know.

Parachute life cycles

Tim Moran, our parachute re-packer, has sent through very useful guidance on the expected life of our parachutes. Over to Tim:

There has been much discussion amongst the clubs recently in respect of parachute service life and repacking cycles. This has prompted me to produce an advice document which I have attached below. Please be assured that I have absolutely no pecuniary interest in the supply of emergency parachutes and I believe my advice is both objective and honest.

Thanks and best regards, Tim Moran

Emergency Parachute Repacking Cycles and Service Life.

Whilst the inspection, repacking and service life of glider emergency parachutes systems is largely unregulated in the UK, the over-arching conditions which are likely to apply are the British Gliding Association's position and the parachute manufacturer's recommendations. Mandatory regulations which the British Parachute Association imposes on its members do not apply elsewhere in aviation.

In the current edition of Laws and Rules for Glider Pilots (16th edition July 2008) in paragraph RP16 the BGA states "...The owner should ensure that it is checked regularly by a competent individual or organisation. The interval should not be greater than the manufacturer's recommendation..."

Most emergency parachute manufacturers recommend a six month repacking cycle with notable exceptions being G.Q. (now part of the Airborne Systems group of companies) and Mertens., who recommend a four month cycle and Parachutes Australia who recommend a eight month cycle. In US airspace the FAA mandates a six monthly repack cycle despite any manufacturer's differing recommendations.

The recommended service life of an emergency parachute can vary and may be between 10 and 25 years according to the manufacturer, i.e.

- *Irvin – 10 years*
- *GQ – 15 years*
- *Mertens – 20 years*

- *USA manufacturers – 20 years*
- *Air –Pol – 20 years*
- *Parachutes Australia – 20 years*
- *Thomas Sports Equipment – 25 years*

Service life currently remains a recommendation and is not mandated by either the FAA or authorities here in the UK though it is expected that the FAA may adopt a position and, if this were the case, the resulting regulation may transfer to the UK.

It should be considered that if an emergency parachute were to be issued to fee paying clients or staff and was beyond the manufacturer's recommended repacking interval or recommended service life, the issuer of that parachute may be in an exposed position if there were to be an incident, perhaps even a landing injury under a perfectly functioning canopy. In today's litigious society it may be prudent to consider the 'duty of care' which applies in UK Law. My personal recommendation to any party who issues parachutes to fee paying clients or staff is that no parachute should remain in service if the due date of inspection and repacking exceeds the manufacturer's recommendation or the recommended service life has expired.

Privately owned and worn emergency parachutes are unlikely to have implications for third parties and presently the risk in their use, regardless of age, condition or status of inspection and repacking probably remains with the owner and user.

It should also be noted that an emergency parachute system which is approaching or has passed the recommended service life will likely employ construction and deployment technology which reflected the thinking at the time of manufacture and may not embrace the technology which has demonstrated improved reliability and performance in later designs.

I am a British Parachute Association qualified Advanced Packer and my inspection and repacking processes embrace the elevated criteria of the British Parachute Association. Therefore, in respect of glider emergency parachutes, provided the condition of the parachute can be reasonably determined to be airworthy and the specification of the parachute is as the manufacturer intended then I will repack and in doing so the parachute will be certified to be airworthy on the date of inspection and repacking and the due date for inspection and repacking will be six months following.

I trust this advice document assists.

Cheers
Martin L
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