

WINTER OPERATIONS – BASIC ADVISE

15/11/11ml

Winter flying

We are now into winter flying (if you have not already noticed!). The following are areas to think about.

Clean the canopy

- The canopies must be cleaned at the beginning of each day as part of the DI. Flying with an unclean canopy must be avoided. This is particularly the case during the winter where the sun is lower and/or the canopy is more likely to mist up.
- If you use the club canopy cleaning kit please return it. If cleaning fluid/clean cloths have run out please tell the Duty Instructor or a member of the committee.

Late landing – low setting sun

- If you are flying in westerly conditions consider landing West instead of South West if landing late in the day towards the setting sun. The change in landing run makes a big difference in your ability to see the landing area clearly

NW ridge – flying west into sun

- Be aware when flying west late in the afternoon along the NW ridge as gliders disappear when below ridge top height which is in shadow. Gliders heading in the opposite direction become very difficult to spot.
- This is significant as you, with the ridge on your left have to give way.
- Likewise if you are flying in the opposite direction, down sun with the ridge on your right, do not assume that the glider flying in the opposite direction has seen you.
- This is made a lot worse with an un-clean canopy.

High in Wave – late in the day

- As a reminder it will get dark on the ground first so allow plenty of time to return and avoid landing when it is too dark to be safe.

Canopy mist up

- Do not launch if you cannot keep the canopy clear. Don't assume the canopy will demist fast enough as you launch. Although you might be able to see straight ahead consider what you would require if you then had a launch failure.
- If you leave the canopy open until the last moment on the launch – do ensure it is closed and locked and re-confirm that your brakes are closed and locked. At that stage of the launch it is very easy to get distracted.
- If the canopy does mist up do not wipe it with anything other than a soft, clean material.

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Changing weather

- The weather during the winter can change significantly. Be alert to any changing conditions.
- Do not be tempted into a launch if you think the conditions are then going to deteriorate. You are better off waiting for a clearance in the weather
- If you are airborne and the weather is deteriorating make a decision to return early. Do not leave it to the last minute. Not only could the conditions be changing rapidly (surface wind direction/strength, reducing visibility etc) but other pilots might also be doing the same which congests the circuit and landing area increasing your work load

Soft/bogy ground

- Be aware when launching on soft ground especially in heavier gliders. The acceleration on launch and subsequent ground run can be severely effected.
- If you are not accelerating sufficiently abandon the launch in good time before the tug pilot does. Leaving it late could leave you little room to stop

Wrap up warm / dehydration

- As we all know it can get very cold in a glider so do ware adequate clothing. Try and keep your feet dry if possible as these will get very cold quickly. However what is less obvious is dehydration. Just because it is not hot doesn't mean to say you would not get dehydrated. Make sure you still take plenty of liquid on board.

Flying close to cloud base

- You are more likely to find your self close to cloud base when ridge soaring. The cloud will tend to 'sit' on top of the lift and therefore you could find yourself cruising around at the top of the lift band just under the cloud. Please ensure you keep your self 100-200' clear of the cloud base if at all possible making it easy for you to see and be seen whilst maintaining adequate clearance from the ridge.

Currency

It is during the winter where your currency can be difficult to maintain. Some of you might not be current enough to fly solo already.

The following is **minimum guidance only and not a target**.

Full club members

- Up to Bronze C – maximum of 4 weeks without flying
- Bronze to Silver – maximum of 6 weeks without flying
- Silver and beyond – 8 weeks or 3 landings in 90 days

Where ever possible you need to keep as current as you can.

Poor weather makes it more difficult to keep current, but it also can make the flying more challenging.

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- Not just in flying the glider but your judgment and awareness will deteriorate with time
- You need to ask yourself the question. How rusty do I feel?
- How current am I for today's conditions in the glider I am about to fly in?
- Just because I flew a K6 in light conditions 6 weeks ago I might not be ok for flying today in my Cirrus in Easterly wave with strong rota!
- For instructors you also need to consider what type of flying you have done. If you have flown but have not had to do any handling you will get rusty.

The DI will also ask the question at the daily briefing and expect an honest answer. If you need support then take a flight with an instructor first. If you do so then consider using it as an opportunity to do your Annual Flight Review saving you doing it again later in the year.

Winter mid week flying has no instructor supervision. It is even more important that you are honest with yourself about your currency.

Remember ask yourself the question: Am I current enough to fly in today's conditions in the type of glider I am about to fly? Any doubt don't fly solo or take a flight with an instructor first.

Winter mid week flying

As already out lined by Martin P but as a reminder.

Unless a volunteer instructor is prepared to supervise it is:

- Silver C minimum
- Bronze C only with instructor supervision
- Pre/post early solo will need volunteer instructor
- No visitor flying unless there is instructor supervision
- Each day there is flying, even if it is Silver C and above, a volunteer instructor, tug pilot or senior pilot takes responsibility for the day.

Cheers

Martin
CFI