



## OPS SCENE

July, 2020.

### **GLIDER PILOTS AND TUG PILOTS: -- INCIDENT REPORT**

In preparation for towing duties a tug pilot found the "in-service" tow rope wound up on the tow rope reel in the normal manner. It was readily visible that the rope was severely damaged, with one of the three strands completely severed at the glider end of the rope. An image is attached:



Clearly this rope is unserviceable and should have been condemned.

Also of concern is that the rope was obviously used on the previous day's operations and was not detected by the hook on crews and the tug pilots on those occasions.

It is the responsibility of the tug pilot to ensure that the rope is serviceable at the beginning and end of each days operations.

It is also the responsibility of the person launching a glider to ensure that the rope is serviceable prior to launching a glider.

*If you are concerned declare the rope unserviceable, wind it up, place it on the top of the tug cupboard, put a new rope into service and inform the tugmaster.*

### **GLIDER PILOTS: -- INCIDENT REPORT**



While on a high-speed final glide to Gawler, a Discus flew through some rough turbulence. The left-hand hip strap of the harness came loose and the pilot struck their head on the canopy. Attempts by the pilot to tighten the strap proved fruitless, and it kept coming loose. The pilot reduced speed to minimise the effect of the turbulence and landed safely.

The harness was examined by Paul Clift who identified the thin wire spring tensioner in the buckle mechanism that supplies tension to the webbing was dislodged on both sides, allowing the webbing to move freely within the buckle (see photos).



The buckle end strap was removed from the adjuster, and the spring was removed and inspected for damage. No damage was found and the spring was securely refitted. Paul reported that the spring is a firm fit and is working as intended. The reason why the spring came loose was not identified.

He believed the damage was likely to have occurred before the Daily Inspection was conducted. This reinforces the need to ensure harnesses are properly inspected as part of the Daily Inspection process. Daily inspectors should look particularly for:

- safe attachment of the harness to the glider airframe;

- the condition of the harness webbing (e.g. abrasions, wear, damage, pulled or loose stitching);
- the ability of the buckles to secure the webbing; and
- the correct operation of the fasten/release mechanism.

The main thing is that the harness should be able to do its dual job of securing the pilot in flight against turbulence and manoeuvring or aerobatic loads, and protecting the pilot against deceleration and sliding underneath the harness in the event of a crash. **If a DI Inspector believes that anything might detract from the ability of a harness to perform these functions, the glider should not be flown.**

*Please remember that unless you have a GFA Authorisation to remove / disable components of a glider you are not permitted to do so in any circumstances. If you do, Paul Clift needs to be informed.*

*If you have a problem with an aircraft you must contact Paul Clift (Your on-field instructor will have his mobile number). If it does not affect the serviceability of the aircraft it must be entered into the **Minor Defects** section of the Maintenance Release. Otherwise it must be entered into the **Major Defects** section and the aircraft withdrawn from service.*

### **CANCELLATION OF A DAY'S GLIDING OPERATIONS DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER:**

Recently we have had operations cancelled because of the weather forecast predicting non flyable conditions. On at least one occasion the forecast has proven incorrect and the day was perfectly soarable.

At the most recent Instructor Panel meeting the instructors agreed on the following procedure which will be followed. *An important component is for all pilots intending to fly to register their intentions on the ASC Gliding Register at least 24 hours before the day they intend to attend.*

If no one is registered on the Gliding Register by 9.00 pm the day before and the forecast is for inclement weather the operation can be cancelled by the duty instructors. They will also inform the registered tug pilot.

If there are passengers / students / solo pilots registered to fly, the instructors will travel to Gawler and assess the situation on site. If the day needs to be cancelled the instructor will do so from the airfield and inform registered pilots / passengers etc.

Safe flying

**John Whittington ASC Gliding CFI**

### **LSA INCLEMENT WEATHER OPERATIONS**

As we are all aware, we have had some really not airworthy weather recently. In our training we teach weather awareness and of course decision making. I usually try and send out an email to encourage students to consider the forecast and whether to fly the next day or not. At times the forecast is not really accurate and a bad forecast can turn out to be a nice flying day. However for students having to travel a long distance to Gawler it can be a wasted trip if the day is not flyable.

So the message is to think ahead and then make a decision whether to come out or not. I generally print out the next days flying program late afternoon. The next morning, at Gawler, I check GOBOKO for any changes and adjust the program accordingly. Even if the day is not flyable, one or two Instructors will generally be at Gawler.

So please think ahead and make sure your plans are correctly reflected in GOBOKO. On that note – I do not like to see students book a flight and then simply not turn up to fly. Apart from bad manners, that also prevents other students from booking. Please cancel on GOBOKO if you are not going to attend for your booked flight.

## **LSA CIRCUIT OPERATIONS**

At our recent Instructor Panel meeting our Safety Officer informed us that a member had queried a lack of appropriate radio calls in the circuit area at Gawler. The member had put that down to a lack of currency flying due to Covid-19.

Over the years there have been numerous rules, regulations, instructions etc in relation to radio calls but the theme has always pointed in the direction of SAFETY. Make a radio call in order to be seen. Nobody wants to listen to unnecessary radio calls, especially when on a quiet relaxing flight in a glider or an instructional flight with a student. This topic is always well discussed with various points of view.

From a safety point it is good to know an aircraft is approaching an airfield, joining a circuit, is on final or is taking off. As an example – we are using runway 31.

We give a call at the GAWLER DAM to advise we are inbound to the circuit. Giving our height is good information for an aircraft departing the circuit.

On approaching from the dam, we have listened to radio calls and have a mental picture of circuit activity and whether it is a good idea to give a joining cross wind call or not. I am not a great proponent of joining mid field crosswind for students or new pilots because decisions/checks need to be made very quickly, half the downwind leg is missed and aircraft already on downwind have priority.

Then we give a call downwind and one for final/full stop or touch and go.

Is a clear runway call necessary? Not if the finals call included full stop or touch and go and an aircraft on final can see you turn off after landing.

Crossing a runway call, particularly if it is the duty runway, is really important. Looking for aircraft on final, particularly if it is a glider, is difficult as they are hard to see. Here again, give the call early so if you didn't see the aircraft, it can tell you it is on late final and give you time to stop.

In a normal operation – backtracking on a runway should be avoided. We have very good taxiways at Gawler. If you are the only aircraft flying that day –that is a different matter. Remember – an aircraft in the circuit always has right of way.

Best advice always is – think ahead and give yourself plenty of time.

Safe Flying

**Karl Faeth ASC CFI**