

Safety IS important

Safety should be the keynote of every glider operation. An accident can do more to cool local enthusiasm, liquidate a club or glider school, than any other factor.

Practically all accidents are avoidable. Most of those that occur can be traced to carelessness. Experienced glider pilots have learned the rules of the game the hard way, by training, or by the studious application of good common sense. However, the extreme thoroughness that the experienced pilot applies to every detail involving safety may not be readily apparent to the novice.

Even an experienced pilot can err. The fundamentals of safety should be kept firmly in mind by everybody at all times. Before take-off the pilot should make certain that the glider is properly assembled and every safety pin double checked, that the launching equipment is adequate and in fully serviceable condition, that the wind is not too strong or too much crosswind for his ability. The tow rope should never be attached to the glider unless someone is in it.

The release hook should be checked frequently for proper operation. The wings of the glider should never be levelled until all safety belts are fastened (shoulder harnesses should always be used—if they aren't installed in the ship they should be) and the pilot is definitely ready to go. The controls should be checked for full free movement.

During the take-off, be prepared at all times for the tow rope to break or become snared on some object on the ground. In winch and auto tows do not pull up steeply until a safe altitude is reached. Recovery from a rope break or similar tow failure is usually a matter of getting the nose down and landing straight ahead. Do not attempt a 180-degree turn unless you have plenty of altitude *and* speed. In the event of a tow failure, immediately pull the release handle to drop what is left of the rope.

In flight don't overtax your ability by trying to stretch your luck. Keep a landing field within easy reach, don't enter clouds for which you are not qualified, don't fly over 10,000 ft. without oxygen, and above everything else *always maintain adequate flying speed*. Below 1000 ft. fly at least 10 mph above the stall, 15 to 20 mph in strong winds, to minimize the effects of downcurrents, gusts and the wind gradient. Make a sensible landing approach pattern that requires about half spoilers from the start of your base leg. Obey local field rules.

During the approach and landing correct for wind drift, but when landing in high grass, be sure the wings are level when you touch, to avoid ground looping. After landing clear the field quickly and remember a simple thing like the wind jamming the ailerons while towing downwind or forgetting to safety a bolt holding the ship on its trailer can ruin a perfect day.

Soaring is safe, but like all types of flying it leaves no room for carelessness. A soaring accident has less serious consequences than a powerplane accident, but safety is important. Skipping a few details on one flight may mean many flights missed while the glider is in the repair shop. Always keep safety foremost in your mind and you will enjoy good soaring.

R. J. C.

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