



Soaring Society of Namibia
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GLIDING SEASON 2016/2017 PRE-SEASON BRIEFING

1.0 INTRODUCTION

With the commencement of the 2016/2017 gliding season imminent, it is of vital importance that cognisance be taken of certain key factors that impact directly and indirectly on the safety of gliding activities in Namibia.

Our country represents one of the foremost gliding destinations in the world, but it is also a very challenging environment with very unique characteristics and flying conditions; to name a few:

- Hot and high -- density altitude;
- Remote locations of bases from major centres;
- Harsh climatological environment – thunder showers, microbursts, wind shear, dust devils, gusts, high temperatures, bright sunlight;
- Sparsely populated environment;
- Sparse water resources.

For these reasons, it is essential that the contents of this document must be carefully studied and the directives contained herein, strictly adhered to.

2.0 SAFETY DIRECTIVES

The objective of these directives is to mitigate safety related risks as far as humanly possible:

- All safety equipment e.g. oxygen, parachutes, survival kits etc. must be thoroughly checked prior to each flight.
- SPOT devices must be carried **on the person of the pilot** at all times during flights.
- FLARM and Power FLARM devices must be switched on at all times from take-off to landing.
- All radio frequencies must have been obtained prior to commencement of gliding activities.
- All radio communications must be checked prior to flights.
- Protective gear e.g. hats, sunglasses, sun screen etc. must be worn at all times during flights.

- Pilots must ensure an adequate supply of water and must regularly consume quantities of water during flight. **Do not wait until you are thirsty. Thirst is an indicator that dehydration has already set in.**
- Ballast must be checked prior to a flight.
- All instruments to be checked prior to a flight, especially with regard to compass and altimeter settings.
- If flying with the aid of a GPS, all batteries are to be fully charged and the GPS switched on and checked prior to take-off.
- Flying is only permitted in the designated class G airspace and only to a maximum altitude of 19500.' **No flying into controlled airspace is allowed at any time and offenders will be grounded.**
- Careful attention must be paid to the daily pre-flight briefings and MET reports.
- Hazards or any aspects which may result in a safety risk, be it on the ground or in the air, must be reported to the CFI immediately.
- The CFI is the accountable person for all gliding activities and therefore has the final say. His/her instructions/determinations must be observed and adhered to at all time.

3.0 FATIGUE MANAGEMENT

Fatigue is a major contributor towards many aviation incidents and accidents.

Given the fact that glider pilots often spend long hours in the air increases the risk of fatigue setting in. Managing fatigue is therefore important and it is the responsibility of the CFI to detect the symptoms of fatigue and make a determination as to the risk of the affected person continuing to fly.

Following are some of the most detectable symptoms of the onset of fatigue:

- Headaches;
- Disturbed sleep patterns;
- Poor concentration;
- Irritability;
- Pain in muscles and/or joints;
- Diarrhoea or constipation;
- Abdominal pains;
- Anxiety;
- Heightened panic levels;
- Asocial behaviour;
- Avoiding interpersonal interaction;
- Excessive sweating when in a cool environment;
- Shakiness;
- Disturbed speech;
- Problematic verbal articulation;
- Irrational thought processes.

There are no hard and fast rules with regard to flight and duty time and compulsory rest periods with regard to glider pilots flying in Namibia. However, based on experience and international best practices with regard to fatigue mitigation, **it is compulsory for pilots to take a one day rest after every six consecutive days of flying.**

Jet lag is a contributing factor to fatigue. For this reason the following shall apply to all glider pilots visiting Namibia from abroad:

- 0 – 4 hours' international time differentiation -- 24 hours compulsory rest after arrival at base;
- More than 4 hours' international time differentiation – 48 hours compulsory rest after arrival at base.

These measures will enable visiting pilots to properly acclimatise and enjoy a proper rest period in preparation for their gliding activities.

4.0 HAZARDOUS ATTITUDES

COMPLACENCY

The nature of gliding lends itself to what is termed as “meditative silence” which can quickly materialise into complacency. The latter can be defined as “a sense of security about a person’s surrounding while failing to recognise or being aware of possible danger.”

As pilots accrue more flight time and gain more experience, complacency is often the bed-fellow. With experience comes boredom, an inclination to cut corners, distractibility, misplaced feelings of content and intentionally overlooking safety precautions. The old saying: “I have done this a thousand times before” underlies this phenomenon.

To combat complacency, the pilot must never assume that everything will run smoothly during the flight. The pilot must also always expect the unexpected.

It is always advisable to think about the “what if” scenario during every flight.

INDISCIPLINE

Pilots often fall into the trap of feeling that their experience has taught them an easier or faster way of doing things. This attitude can also lead to non-alignment with guidelines set by more experienced aviators or safety related directives. This is an extreme hazard.

OVERCONFIDENCE

Closely related to complacency, a state of overconfidence occurs in instances of familiarity with a situation or condition as well as repetition. To have confidence in one’s abilities is good, but if a tendency to cut corners and ignoring proper procedure sets in, it is overconfidence and therefore a hazard.

BY ADHERING TO THESE DIRECTIVES AND TAKING COGNISANCE OF SOME OF THE PITFALLS, WE CAN ALL LOOK FORWARD TO AN ENJOYABLE, CHALLENGING AND REWARDING GLIDING SEASON.