

Ground Handling, Some Important Tips.

Quote; *"Nothing is more heartbreaking than to see a beautiful glider damaged by incompetent handling on the ground.....often the result of someone not realising the significance of doing things the right way."* - Derek Piggott, *Gliding Safety***.

Some of our ground handling is not of the highest order, so here's a revision of some of the basic rules;

1. If you are unsure how to rig/derig a certain type, do not guess, find someone who knows and learn from them.
2. Always ensure that the tail dolly is seated correctly on the tail before doing up the catches, this will avoid forcing the catches and risking breaking them, or damaging the gel or both.
3. Ditto with wing walkers.
4. Always ensure that the canopy is closed and locked shut with all straps etc inside before towing out, an unlatched canopy can bounce around and easily break.
5. Don't tow out too fast. Drive at walking pace only.
6. Take extra care when towing out with water ballast in the wings as it can slosh about and tip the wrong wing onto the ground
7. Again, take extra care when crossing runway/taxiway edges.
8. Don't try to squeeze through small gaps between parked gliders and/or parked cars, take the time and trouble to go round, don't forget to check to make sure that it is clear first.
9. Do not tow out gliders on short ropes with a tail dolly but without a nose walker, if the car stops on even a very slight downhill gradient the glider will keep going and crash into the car, if the chap on the wing stops moving, the glider will rotate around him and crash into the car, you just can't win! Ropes should be at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the span of the glider in length
10. Never tow out gliders with a rope but without a tail dolly, take the trouble to find the tail dolly. (The dolly **will** be either in the hangar the trailer or the launch point bus)
11. When the grass areas are wet, particularly in winter, tow out on the hard taxiways to avoid making ruts in the grass.
12. Always replace taildollies and tow out gear in the correct place either in the hangar or in the trailers at the end of the day or after use, that way the next person will be able to find them, and you won't end up taking them home in your car!
13. Do not lift the tails of gliders by the tailplane; they are not designed to take the loads.
14. Never attempt to turn gliders round without a tail dolly and without lifting the tail.
15. Better to lift the tail of glass gliders than to lean on the nose, some gliders are very tail heavy without a pilot on board, and (unless you weigh a considerable amount) your weight may only be sufficient to partially raise the tail risking it banging down as the glider is turned, putting unnecessary strain on the tailplane fitting
16. Don't push or pull gliders by the wingtips. *Continued over...*

17. Do not push the glider around on the ground using the flying control surfaces.
18. Always take the tail dolly off when the glider is parked either on the airfield or in the hangar.
19. Never step over wings or fuselages, always make the effort to walk round.
20. Don't sit on the wing.
21. Never walk away from an open canopy, or the wind may close it for you.
22. Never put your hand through the D.V. panel when the glider is moving, always wait until the glider has stopped, and then only with extreme care. Extra care should be taken when wearing jackets with bulky sleeves.
23. Keep the canopy cover on at all times (remove before flight!) and the canopy latched.
24. Whenever you derig a glider and put it in its trailer make sure that the canopy is locked shut and ensure that the glider is secured correctly in the trailer. Before moving a trailer also firstly check that the glider is secured correctly.

When it's windy...

This paragraph is mainly for you K8-drivers. In S&H these days, we don't have much that's vulnerable to being thrown around by anything other than pretty strong winds. But K8s are the exception – and in any case, we should still be following good practices moving and parking all the other gliders, as a matter of course.

You probably shouldn't have a K8 out in conditions that are liable to be injurious to its health, but you can always get situations like the wind picking up while you are out there – or an unexpected gust at any time.

So, specially for K8s in strong winds (or even breezy in the case of a K8);

- don't try to get away with fewer than three people to move the glider – even more if it's turned nasty.
- when changing direction while towing, be ready to swap wing tip holders so that the upwind tip is always the one being held, and;
- keep the upwind tip low, don't let the wind get under it
- secure the stick against controls slamming when towing downwind
- park it properly; across the wind, or angle it slightly downwind; put the into-wind tip on the ground, and secure it. Put a tyre (or tyres) on the downwind side of the tailskid to stop it being blown round, then chock the skid to prevent the tail being lifted over its tyre by a gust.
- Don't abandon gliders (any glider) by the hangar without parking them properly – it might be a sheltered corner when you leave it, but a small change in wind direction can have it gusting round the corners

** *Gliding Safety* is available from the office; in his inimitable style, Derek lists more hazards to the health of pilots and gliders than you could think of in your worst nightmares – and tells you how to avoid all of them. Highly recommended reading.