

If an incident has occurred in which outside help is needed, make sure that your call to the emergency services gives them the information they need to get the correct assets to you as quickly as possible. This means that you need to rapidly think through exactly what it is you need. If someone has been hurt you will automatically be thinking you need an ambulance. *This is almost certainly the wrong choice.*

Which service do you require? To answer this you need to be crystal clear in your mind about the terrain. If the incident location is a few metres from a road, then an ambulance will be fine. When the operator asks which service you need, ask for the ambulance. They will send either a regular ambulance or an Air Ambulance.

In more or less any other location the emergency help will need to be able to traverse rough or steep or boggy ground to reach the casualty. If that is the case you need to get through to the Police. The Police can task Mountain Rescue, Air Ambulances and Search and Rescue helicopters (with winches). The majority of UK ambulance control centres are not able to call on Mountain Rescue or Search and Rescue (winch equipped) helicopters. The Air Ambulance helicopters need flat, firm ground to land on - not much use if your casualty is halfway up the face of a crag. So when the operator asks which service you need, ask for the Police.

If the location is on a coastal cliff then dial 999 and ask for the Coastguard. They can call out all the other emergency services.

Where are you? The next thing you need to be crystal clear on is the location. Use OS grid co-ordinates. Make sure you have an app on your smart phone that uses the GPS to give you the two letter, six figure grid reference. Nobody in the emergency service control room is going to know hang gliding/paragliding site names, local pubs or any of that nonsense. You need that help to come directly to you - rather than watching them circling two miles away for half an hour trying to spot you.

The control room operative may ask you for a postcode. You should be politely insistent if a postcode is not appropriate. (If required ask to speak to a supervisor.) All emergency services can use OS grid references.

Use the magic words. When you get put through to your chosen emergency service, when asked what type of accident has occurred, say "Paragliding (or hang gliding) accident, fall from height." If appropriate, add "Remote location." This

EMERGENCY ACTION CARD

- 1. GIVE FIRST AID** - secure and separate the wing to prevent dragging injury. Leave the wing spread out as visual marker.
- 2. GET HELP:** Dial 999 and ask for Police. Tell Police controller *"Fall from height, suspected significant injury, difficult access, air ambulance /SAR helicopter needed (as appropriate)."* Give OS grid reference (see over). When helicopter is confirmed on the way, give phone to person administering first aid - dispatcher can advise them.
- 3. PREPARE FOR HELICOPTER:** Clear the airspace. Use gliders, bags etc to set out a large 'H' 'All Land' signal. Once everyone has landed, secure all loose objects, including any debris. When heli arrives...
- 4. INDICATE CASUALTY.** Stand with arms in a Y shape. Don't wave.

NONESUCH SOARING CLUB EMERGENCY GRID REFERENCES

Postcodes are no good. Do not give site name - just Grid Reference.

North Hill	November Delta 341 423
Bestsite Ridge	Sierra Kilo 547 020
Smoothair Bowl	Sierra Echo 816 204
Seabay Cliffs	Papa Delta 459 976
Charming Village tow site	Lima Alpha 234 983
Scaryedge	November Delta 931 646

immediately puts you into the highest priority category. After that you can go into the detail of precisely how remote the location is. If the only practical way of evacuating your casualty will be by winching them up into a helicopter (or carrying off by a Mountain Rescue team), make this absolutely clear.

In all cases make sure you have all the required information to hand, and present it to the emergency services in a calm, coherent and professional manner. There are no other magic words or phrases to speed things up; all emergency services calls are treated as emergencies. You will need to provide the following ...

- Casualty location (OS Grid)
- Access details if appropriate
- Casualty details (name, address, injuries, age, etc)
- Caller's own details.

Prepare for their arrival. If assistance is coming by road, make sure you post someone at a sensible point on the road to direct an ambulance. If a helicopter is coming, clear the air by visual signal and/or radio. The All Land signal (a large 'H' made of glider bags or similar) needs to be set out to get other pilots out of the sky. Pilots must land immediately. Think about the difficulties the helicopter crew will have in spotting you - and do whatever you can to make yourself visible - a glider laid out will be far more use for this than

one in a bag. The helicopters generally land a little distance away from the casualty, so having the glider adjacent to the casualty is probably the best place. (You may still need to be ready to rapidly ball this up once the helicopter has definitely acquired you).

If you are in mainland Europe 112

is the number to use. It will put you through to English-speaking operators and helps get a helicopter more rapidly in some cases.

Some BHPA clubs issue Emergency Action Cards to their members, as aide memoirs. The example card shown above incorporates the advice contained in this article.

Landing on the base bar - don't!

Readers may recall the Board of Inquiry report (synopsis: Skywings December 2013; full report: www.bhpa.co.uk/documents/safety/formal_investigations) into a hang glider top-landing accident at the Long Mynd in which the pilot was very seriously injured when the hang glider's nose impacted with the rear of his helmet. The report specifically warned pilots of the dangers of prone landing approaches, especially with single-strap harnesses.

A recent accident in Germany reinforces this message. A pilot flying a sports-type hang glider nosed in on landing and suffered serious head injuries when the glider's nose hit his head. The pilot survived but suffered a broken neck. Witnesses report him flying the glider on the base bar until impact. Other similar incidents have been reported although not with quite such grievous outcomes. Flying the final approach in the semi-upright position with hands on the uprights, as taught in all BHPA schools, is by far the safer method when things go wrong.

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