



SAFETY ADVISORY

Issued by Angus Pinkerton - Chairman of the Flying & Safety Committee 18 November 2004.

All pilots must READ, DIGEST AND TAKE ACTION on the contents of this Notice and keep it for future reference.

If you hold a copy of the BHPA Technical Manual this notice must be inserted into it and retained until it is withdrawn or superseded on instructions from the Chairman FSC.

HANG GLIDER AEROTOWING: FOOT LAUNCHING WITH A 50/50 BRIDLE

A recent incident involving a 50/50 bridle has highlighted a safety point.

A skyfloater type hang glider had been aerotowed successfully many times by the pilot behind a flexwing tug, using a 50/50 bridle, and always launching from a dolly. Because the flexwing tug tended to tow at around 45 mph the bridle connection to the hang glider keel was positioned some 12" or so forward of the control frame top, which helped avoid excessive pitch forces.

When the pilot came to attempt a foot launch using the same set-up the glider refused to leave the ground at launch and it was only the fact that large wheels were fitted that averted a nasty accident. Further testing with a very experienced foot-launch pilot showed that, with the pilot upright for take-off, the bridle set-up was pulling the nose down excessively during the take-off run.

The fifty/fifty bridle is most often used in dolly launch operations. No problems have been reported where pilots have foot launched using a fifty/fifty bridle with the top connection near the top of the control frame - but Chief Aerotow Coaches should be alert to the possibility of gliders being reluctant to pitch up for the initial 'climb to ten feet'. (It is very easy to witness this behaviour but incorrectly put it down to faulty technique or turbulence.)

Foot launching gliders with a fifty/fifty bridle connected significantly in front of the top of the control frame should be avoided unless there is definite evidence that this set-up works successfully. (If such examples exist please contact Technical Manager Mark Dale (0870 873 4571 / mark-dale@bhp.co.uk) with details.

--- end ---