

Training for qualified pilots

Advice from the BHPA Flying & Safety Committee

Club Pilots are regarded as being suitably skilled to make their own decisions. Nevertheless there are further skills that a pilot should aspire to master. Obtaining advice from suitably qualified persons can be a very efficient method of making progress with these and other skills. The BHPA's position on training for qualified members is as follows.

- Training for qualified members is defined as any situation where a new factor is being deliberately introduced to a pilot already qualified to fly that craft type. This factor may be a skill or a significantly different environment (eg mountains).
- All training for qualified members is regarded as being a form of coaching; formal instruction ends with the issue of the CP (novice) rating.
- Any provider of training for qualified members must be suitably qualified. This means that as a minimum they must hold a Club Coach rating, and have the necessary experience of whatever it is that they are teaching and the environment being used. Ideally such providers will also hold a BHPA Senior Coach or Instructor license. For many activities (eg tow conversions, SPHG conversions) precise qualification requirements are stipulated.
- Guiding (ie introducing suitably qualified pilots to a new geographical area where the pilots will use their existing skills and knowledge) is not regarded as training. Persons providing guiding services still have a legal Duty of Care to their clients.
- Offering comments/information on flying conditions experienced, landing fields in use, etc, is the duty of every pilot and is not considered to be training.
- Note that Coaches are only permitted to provide their services voluntarily. If remuneration or other consideration is involved, Coaches risk losing their cover under the BHPA's liability insurance policy.

Various individuals and organizations offer services for qualified pilots. These can be loosely separated into two categories: guides and training providers. Irrespective of the type of service, remember that the final decision to fly is your own. The same applies to all manoeuvres and activities undertaken in flight.

If being guided in a new geographical area, it's important to understand that there are no BHPA qualification criteria for guides, who may well have no instructional or coaching qualification or skills. Their function is only to get you to the site and introduce you to it. Local knowledge and site familiarity are invaluable and should

be tapped into, but the bottom line is that you have to be certain that the site, weather, etc, are suitable for you to fly.

If being trained in a new skill or set of skills (eg thermalling, SIV, XC), check out carefully the qualifications and relevant experience of any person providing training. Be realistic about your own experience level and only consider appropriate courses.

Ensure that the course provider's aims are similar to your own. A badly run or inappropriate course will teach you nothing and may have a detrimental effect on your development as a pilot. If attending a course abroad, ensure that you take out medical repatriation insurance that specifically covers paragliding and hang gliding.

Training providers must meet the general qualification criteria above, and any specific requirements for the type of training they are offering; their cover under the BHPA's policy will be affected otherwise. Training providers also must ensure that their trainees are current and suitably qualified for the training proposed, and that they take out medical repatriation insurance that specifically covers paragliding and hang gliding. Training providers should carry out regular Risk Assessments and fully exercise their Duty of Care to their trainees.

Schools, Instructors and Coaches are reminded that both they and any of their student/trainee members are only covered under the BHPA insurance policy outside the UK for a maximum of 120 days in any membership year. No cover exists for USA and Canada, and special criteria apply for Australia. Non-UK residents have no cover abroad; they must join the respective national association or obtain separate third-party cover whilst engaged in activities outside the UK.

Further reading: BHPA Fact Sheet on SIV courses (www.bhpa.co.uk/members/documents/index.php); the BHPA Technical Manual (www.bhpa.co.uk/members/schools/index.php); the BHPA Pilot Handbook. For further information about the BHPA's insurance and related matters, please contact the BHPA Insurance Officer. se contact the BHPA insurance officer.