

Guidance for hang gliding & paragliding pilots visiting the United Kingdom

The BHPA welcomes pilots from abroad.

The United Kingdom (UK) is made up of four countries, England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales (Cymru). The UK has some very crowded skies; the need to protect commercial airline operations has resulted in little space left over for recreational fliers, and even this has to be shared with military jets. Because of this, flying cross country in the UK will almost always involve complex navigation around airspace that you must not enter.

The topography of the UK varies considerably, with the more mountainous areas largely found in the North of England (Scafell Pike 978m), Northern Ireland (Slieve Donard 850m), Scotland (Ben Nevis 1,345m), and Wales (Yr Wyddfa/Snowdon 1,085m). Dartmoor on the South-West Peninsula of England reaches over 600m, but the rest of Southern England is mostly limited to hills (Downs, Wolds, Moors) of 300m or less. Coastal soaring sites are often found where hills meet the sea.

Good reverse launching skills are a must for visiting paraglider pilots. Hills are usually dynamically soared in winds of 25km/h or so, whilst trying to locate usable thermals. Visiting pilots should also be aware that hills in South-East England can get very busy, with hang glider and paraglider pilots of mixed abilities often sharing the same hill.

UK flying sites are looked after by around 60 local [BHPA recreational clubs](#). Access to those flying sites has often been the result of lengthy, and sometimes difficult, negotiations with local landowners, farmers and graziers. Most UK flying sites are therefore subject to site rules which have been put in place by the local club to try to ensure the safety of pilots flying the site, and continued access to that site for the foreseeable future.

Once you've decided which area you are going to visit, please visit our [Club locations map](#) and make contact with the club responsible for flying sites in that area. They will be able to fully brief you and hopefully ensure that you get a warm welcome and some first class flying.

BHPA members carry £5 million third-party insurance cover as a result of their BHPA membership, and most UK flying sites have been negotiated on that basis. Visiting overseas pilots will therefore need to carry proof of suitable third-party insurance cover, and be able to produce an IPPI card to show that they are suitably qualified to fly a particular site.

If you decide to take out temporary BHPA membership, please be aware that the third-party cover in respect of the passenger if flying Tandem is restricted to flights in the UK only. For further information about about BHPA insurance cover, please contact the [BHPA Insurance Officer](#).

Aerial Collision Avoidance Rules

General

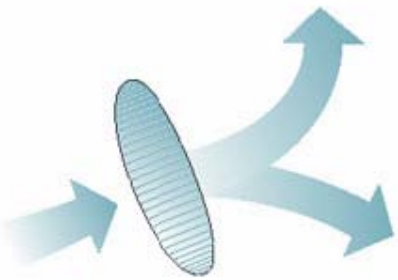
The prime rule is the first one!

- It is the pilot's responsibility to take all possible measures to avoid a collision with any other aircraft.
- An aircraft shall not be flown so close to another aircraft as to create a danger of collision.
- No formation flying is permitted unless all the pilots have agreed.
- When required by these Rules to give way, an aircraft shall avoid passing over, under or ahead of another unless well clear.
- An aircraft that has right of way under these Rules shall maintain its course and speed.

Converging

Other than in the case of approaching head-on and overtaking:

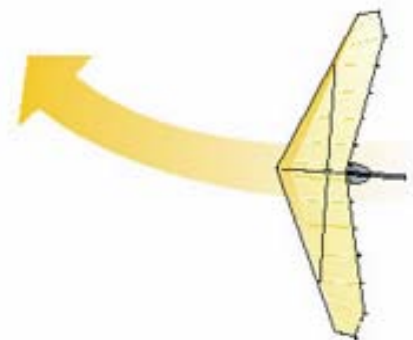
- A powered aircraft shall give way to airships, gliders and balloons.
- An airship shall give way to gliders and balloons.
- A glider shall give way to balloons.
- When two aircraft of the same classification converge at approximately the same altitude, the one with the other on its right shall give way.



Converging courses (Glider and distances not to scale – You would never be anywhere near this close!)

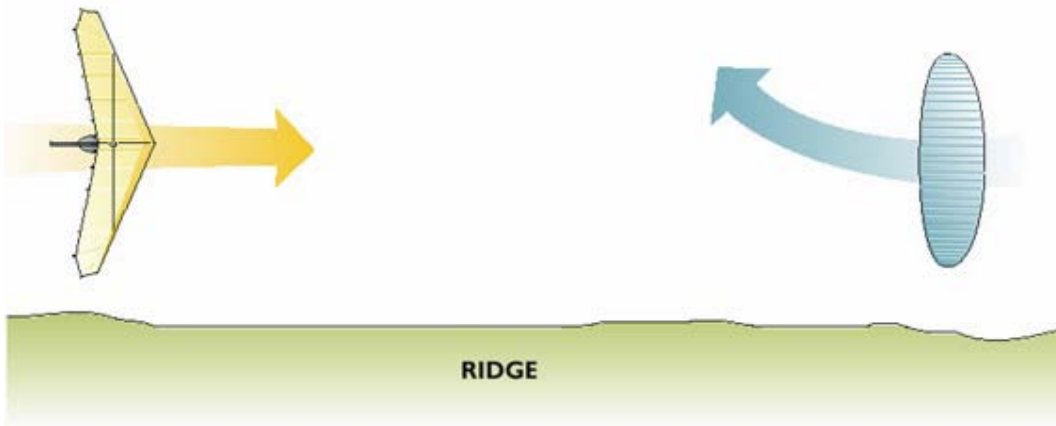
When approaching head-on

When approaching approximately head-on with a risk of collision, both aircraft shall alter course to the right.



Approaching head-on (Glider and distances not to scale – You would never be anywhere near this close!)

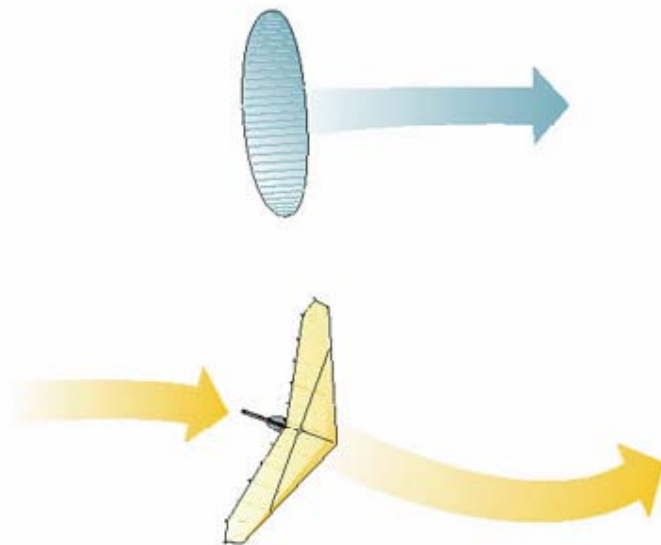
(This rule is modified slightly by UK ridge-soaring conventions: when ridge-soaring, if two gliders are flying towards each other at similar height, the pilot with the ridge on the left should move out so that the other has room to maintain course without having to turn into or over the ridge.)



Approaching head-on when ridge-soaring (Gliders and distances not to scale – You would never be anywhere near this close!)

Overtaking

When overtaking another aircraft you must give way to it and alter course to the right to overtake.



Overtaking (Gliders and distances not to scale – You would never be anywhere near this close!)

In the UK a glider may overtake another glider to either the left or right (hang gliders and paragliders are both considered to be gliders).

When hill soaring the safest course of action is often to turn back rather than to overtake. If you do need to overtake, make sure that you pass well clear of the other glider.

Landings

- An aircraft landing or on final approach has right of way over all other aircraft in the air or on the ground.
- The lowest aircraft of any on an approach to land has right of way, provided it does not cut in front of or overtake any aircraft on final approach.
- When landing, you should leave clear on the left any glider that is landing, has landed or is about to take off. (This Rule may have to be modified to suit the site.)
- After landing, you must clear the landing area as soon as possible.

Aeronautical Charts

You must have an up-to-date aeronautical chart if flying cross-country or anywhere other than club sites where you have had a comprehensive local airspace briefing. Charts are available in two scales: 1:250,000 and 1:500,000. They can be ordered from flightstore.co.uk.

ICAO Aeronautical Charts

Scale 1:500,000 (United Kingdom)

These charts (known as 'half mil.' charts) show all airspace. Three charts cover the UK: Scotland, Orkney and Shetland; Northern England and Northern Ireland; and Southern England and Wales.

Topographical Air Charts

Scale: 1:250,000 (United Kingdom)

These charts (known as 'quarter mil.') only show airspace that has a lower limit below 5000 ft AMSL or Flight Level 55. Seven charts cover the UK.

Notices to Aviation (NOTAMs)

Whenever you fly you should check the Notices to Aviation (NOTAMs) for any Temporary Restricted Airspace (TRAs) or any other activities that may affect your flight. These are published by the [National Air Traffic Service Aeronautical Information Service](#) (NATS AIS). There's no need to register, just enter the username 'BHPAuser' and password 'password'. You may find the text based data hard to decipher and prefer the more graphic displays provided by [NOTAM Info](#) or [SkyDemon Light](#). For further information about NOTAMs, please visit the [NOTAMs page](#) on our website.

Civil Aircraft Notification Procedure (CANP)

In addition to checking NOTAMs for restrictions and warnings, you should use the Civil Aircraft Notification Procedure (CANP) to warn other pilots of your intentions. This is particularly important if flying Monday - Friday. The local hang-gliding/paragliding club should be able to advise about this procedure, or you can visit the [CANP page](#) on our website for further information.

Radios

Use of the classic ham-radio on 144 MHz is not allowed in flight. Only licenced airband radios may be used on specific frequencies.

If you follow this guidance and contact the appropriate UK club before flying one of their sites, you will be sure of a warm welcome, and hopefully enjoy your visit to the UK.