



SAFETY ADVISORY

Issued by Angus Pinkerton - Chairman of the Flying & Safety Committee 15 February, 2016.

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

This notice will remain available on the BHPA website and in the Technical manual.

Hang-gliding harnesses with back plates

In 2015 a BHPA member suffered severe injuries as a result of a poor landing on his flex-wing hang-glider. The investigation on the incident found that there were several factors that contributed to this accident. The main factor was found to be the decision of the pilot to make the final approach and flare with his hands positioned on the base bar of the glider, rather than on the uprights of the control frame.

A significant factor in this decision was that the harness being used featured an articulated back –plate design, which offers significant resistance to the pilot when trying to rotate upright and change their grip. Several models of high–performance harnesses have similar characteristics.

Whilst subsequent testing confirmed that this harness was not faulty in any way, the design does require significant effort and a corresponding reduction in control during the rotation process, and for this reason several pilots have routinely preferred to perform a landing approach without rotating upright until the last moment.

Pilots are advised that making a landing approach, particularly in very light wind conditions without rotating into the upright position is potentially very hazardous, and considerably more likely to result in injury in the case of a failed landing than if the pilot is vertical and gripping the control frame uprights.

All harnesses should be set up so that rotation is easy and all pilots should adopt the upright position in good time during approach.

The use of base bar wheels is also strongly recommended.