



SAFETY ADVISORY

Issued by Angus Pinkerton - Chairman of the Flying & Safety Committee 16 January, 2006.

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If you hold a copy of the BHPA Technical Manual this notice must be inserted into it and retained until it is withdrawn or superseded on instructions from the Chairman FSC.

The Chairman of the FSC wishes to bring two things to the notice of all Hang Glider Dual Aerotow pilots.

a. The Safety Notice below issued by the USHGA.

b. The updated BHPA 'Aerotowing Dual Hang Gliders: Key safety points' document.

USHGA SAFETY NOTICE REGARDING THE CONDUCT OF HG AEROTOW TANDEM OPERATIONS

Experiences in hang glider tandem flight using aero-tow launch along with analysis of accidents and incidents that have occurred during such flight strongly suggest, for safety reasons, the following cautions be observed.

If the pilot of the tandem glider finds that he/she is too low behind the tug and slow enough that the glider will not climb without pushing out pass trim, then the pilot should pull in and release rather than trying to push out and climb to the tug altitude. Though pushing out to climb to the tug altitude has been a common practice usually accomplished without incident, there is a deep underlying danger in doing this. Should the tandem glider become unattached from the tug during this maneuver, the nose high attitude of the tandem glider attained while doing this will cause a very abrupt stall which will result in a much greater altitude loss than one would expect (possibly more than 750 ft.) The most extreme cases may result in structural failure of the glider.

Towing tandems requires extra awareness on the part of the tug pilots, particularly in the early part of the tow to help the tandem pilot avoid the development of critical situations. Prior to the start of the tow, proper tow speeds based on the gross weight of the tandem glider should be determined. Greater total weight will require correspondingly higher tow speeds. It is CRITICAL to understand that the towed hang glider is at risk when the tow is slow and the glider is low. When towing a tandem glider, the tug pilot should fly the appropriate airspeed to keep the tandem glider in the proper position and if there is any doubt the tug pilot should fly slightly faster and avoid flying slightly slow.. The tug pilot should avoid pulling up abruptly and leaving the tandem glider low. If the glider is low on tow, the tug pilot should attempt to speed up and to descend to the altitude of the towed glider, releasing the tow rope only as a last resort.

David G. Broyles, USHGA Chairman of Safety and Training Committee.

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BHPA Aerotowing Dual Hang Gliders: Key safety points.

1. The difference between being a little out of position and being locked out is very small when on tow with a dual hang glider.
2. Tug pilots should be specifically briefed if the dual instructor is thinking of letting the student do any part of the tow. The tug pilot must pay very close attention to the glider behind him, and release it sooner rather than later if it starts to get out of position.
3. On tow the Pilot in Command must have his hand actually on the release at all times. 'Near' the release is not close enough! When you have two hands completely full of locked-out glider, taking one off to go looking for the release guarantees that your situation is going to get worse before it gets better.
4. If the student is flying the glider on tow and gets the least bit out of position release immediately! You will not fight it back into position, and the situation will go from inconvenient to dangerous in the twinkling of an eye. This is especially important below 1000 feet agl.
5. If you get low on the tow such that recovery would involve a big push out, release immediately! Attempting to recover from this position exposes you to the possibility of a tow line failure and a very severe stall.
6. Full control of a dual glider requires the pilot to be situated with both hands widely spaced on the base bar, chest no more than six inches above the bar, and able to push out to full arm extension and pull in to knees over the bar.
7. The only people who should ever have control of the glider below 1000 feet are:
 - Fully qualified dual aerotow pilots.
 - Students who have completed at least twenty tows and have demonstrated good control on tow above 1000 feet.
 - Fully qualified solo aerotow pilots who are being trained as a dual aerotow pilot and have completed at least one dual flight as a passenger where good control on tow was demonstrated above 1000 feet.
8. Hang glider pilots converting to aerotow benefit from an initial dual flight to show them the correct positioning behind the tug. This can be combined with 'site familiarisation' on the way back down. There is no benefit to be gained from letting them handle the controls during the tow.

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