

Briefing Notes for Basic Instructors, and the Management of Trial Lessons

Dartmoor Gliding Society

Introduction

Trial lesson flying is a very important part of DGS Gliding Club Operations.

- Trial Lessons permit members of the public to experience gliding in a safe environment.
- Gives the potential for new members.
- Provides a valuable revenue stream.
- Allows early instructors to gain experience without being exposed to the more difficult parts of the syllabus.

Mismanaged, trial lesson flying can “take-over” and become disruptive to the club operation as a whole.

Trial lesson flights must be the safest flying we do; any risks must be reduced to absolute minimums.

Rules

It is said by some that rules are for the guidance of wise men and the obedience of fools.

These notes are guidance only. Policies and objectives are outlined as a framework to help you make decisions on a day by day basis.

Flight safety

Value for money

It is a common misconception to assume a trial lesson person values “time in the air” as highly as a glider pilot might. This can lead to unnecessarily low final turns as the instructor tries to deliver a longer airtime. Final turns must be no lower than 300ft.

It is *DGS policy*, that if the basic instructor feels the flight was unreasonably short he may simply offer a 2nd flight. This is at his/her discretion and permission does not need to be sought.

Normally the trial lesson person enjoys the whole experience including the briefing before and after. The flight might be quite short, but the whole experience is considerably longer.

Flying lesson

All trial lesson flight must contain a training element; this is necessary to meet the legal criteria set out for this type of flight. You will often find the situation where the pupil will not wish to take the controls. While taking the controls is a good thing, the

pupil need not be pushed too hard. The policy at DGS is the lesson is still quite legitimate even if the pupil is not “hands on”.

Lookout

In all flights the pupil must be asked to assist with lookout (see BGA patter)---please encourage them to be part of the flight crew in this sense. In addition it is good practice to repeat the process particularly in circuit, i.e downwind leg, “lets have a good look around, particularly on the outside of our circuit and on the opposite side---I cant see any other gliders, Can you?”

Paperwork

It is essential that the appropriate consent forms have been signed. This is normally taken care of by the logkeeper.

Flying without paperwork could cause considerable difficulties .

Flight planning

Landing out with a trial lesson is treated as a serious incident, and must be reported to the safety officer, the CFI and the BGA through the incident reporting system. Landing out with a trial lesson demonstrates poor flight planning, and runs unnecessary risks.

Weather minima

It is not possible to lay down hard and fast rules, but the following weather limitations should be used as guidance. If the conditions are similar to or worse, it may be better to keep your pupil on the ground.

- The wind is turbulent.(Varying by more than 10 kts).
- The wind is strong (< 20 kts)
- Cloudbase is less than 1200’
- Flight visibility is less than 5km
- Launching above more than 4/8th cloud

State of mind of P2

Please be mindful of a number of dangers when flying members of the public.

- Peer pressure, someone flying because a family member or friend is placing them under pressure to do so. The idea is not to frighten people, so discuss it with the individual and make an excuse.
- Drink, do not fly with someone if you suspect they have been drinking.
- Strange or abusive behaviour. Only fly with people you feel happy to do so, we are not obliged to fly members of the public and DGS will not tolerate any abuse of its instructors.

Scope of Basic Instruction (DGS)

As well as standard trial lesson flying, every opportunity should be taken for the BI to teach the first lessons for the ab-initio pupil. It is *DGS policy* to encourage BIs to teach the first 6 launches or so (pre take off checks, lookout in all phases of flight, turns, first stall and trimming---all flying exercises above 500ft). Additionally the BI is encouraged to deliver the ground briefs as listed on the training card.

Before first attempts at the briefings, please seek advice from an experienced instructor. Then take every opportunity to help ab-initio pupils complete their ground training.

These policies are intended to give the BI some practical experience and confidence before going on an Ass Cat course.

Etiquette and planning strategy

It is the longer term aim to operate 2 training gliders each weekend day.

- The first aircraft is prioritised on standard club training.
- The 2nd aircraft is prioritised on trial lesson flying.

Trial lessons will be encouraged to fly on the days we know we have cover for both aircraft.

Wherever possible, trial lessons will be booked in advance. Inevitably people passing by may wish to “take a trial lesson” in a more ad-hoc fashion. If they fly or not is entirely at the discretion of the instructor in charge of the trial lesson aircraft, the instructor must not feel embarrassed to say no, it is better to send people away than set unrealistic expectations or overstrain the operations on the day. (Generally achieving one trial lesson flight per hour is fairly realistic and should be used for planning purposes)

It goes without saying that if the instructor has kindly agreed to volunteer for his duty day, that he or she will be provided with priority use of an aircraft. The aircraft will not be taken away for any other purpose without agreement.

The instructor should remember that long trial lesson flights can cause problem as well as be counter productive. Twenty minutes or so is normally quite adequate for a first flight. Too often an unnecessary backlog is created because the flights are too long.

The instructor should be sensible and manage the day so reasonable breaks for food and drink are taken. He should ask for assistance to permit appropriate breaks, as he feels needs them.

At some times of the year, some instructors may find themselves short of hours for renewal. If this is the case, it is hoped that a duty instructor might stand aside to permit an instructor to meet his hour's requirement.

Management of cash

When the trial lesson is booked, it is quite normal for the flight to have been pre-paid. If you agree to undertake additional flights or agree to sell a trial lesson on the day, please be mindful that the cash needs to be taken.

Club members will normally be happy to undertake this task for you. But please try to remember to check it is being dealt with.

Have Fun

Please enjoy flying for the club, and thank you for your efforts

Don Puttock

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Dartmoor Gliding Society