

Winch Operations

With the arrival of the new Winch at Aston Down, several methods and operating procedures have changed and you should read this notice to make sure you are aware of the changes and their implications. If in doubt – ask!

The Winch

- The Skylaunch winch will be positioned at the far end of the runway. It displays a yellow rotating beacon only when in gear. It has 2 cables & therefore launches 2 gliders before the retrieve vehicle (tow car) brings the cables back to the launch point.

The Retrieve Vehicle (Tow car)

- The vehicle is fitted with an offset spreader bar so that the 2 cables are dragged over the grass from the winch to the launch point while the vehicle itself travels along the edge of the runway.
- When the cables are released from the car, the bar must be retracted and locked into position.
- The vehicle has right of way on the runway and will not stop for gliders and aircraft landing on the adjacent grass areas except in an emergency situation.

Cables

- Gliders will normally be launched, one from the grass and one from the runway. Drag the appropriate cable to the glider parked on the hard surface and don't worry about the angle of the cable as it makes very little difference to the launch.
- Do not alter the cable attachment setup – we no longer use the original car tow swivels.
- Leave enough room between the two gliders so the retrieve car can pass between with cables.
- The downwind cable is used first in a crosswind.
- Do not touch the other cable at all when the first cable is in use!
- Check the weak link colour on the strop (some colours have changed).

Signalling

- Get the account numbers for the log from the next gliders in the queue during the cable retrieve.
- The next 2 gliders must be ready to launch or they will be removed from the line.
- Pay double attention that glider is actually ready to launch before signalling - with tail dolly off, pilot ready etc. as the glider will be airborne in one fuselage length.
- Pay particular attention both at the launch point and on the Bus to ensure the field is clear and the Signaller that no glider or aircraft is passing overhead. Remember this winch launches gliders to approximately 2000 ft in zero wind and will achieve 3000 ft in a headwind.
- Signalling is by short-range radio between winch (c/sign: Cotswold winch) & the bus (Cotswold bus) together with light signals - make sure you are familiar with the use of both together.
- The cables must be clearly identified to the winch (strop colour or east/west etc)
- Stop signal to be displayed when aerotow, motorglider or aircraft departing. This will warn traffic on or around the runway area. Bus to check its clear ahead before allowing departure.
- If the glider is carrying water, hold glider wing level and don't launch until balanced.