



The United States Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association, Inc.

## USHPA Basic Safety Recommendations

Standard Operating Procedure 12-01  
Last Amended October 2008

### 12-01.01 General

- A. This SOP is a set of safety recommendations for hang glider flight operations.
- B. Definition - A hang glider is defined as a glider capable of being carried, foot launched and foot landed solely by the energy and use of the pilots legs.
- C. Hang gliding flights in the United States are governed by FAR part 103, Federal Aviation Regulation, Ultralight Vehicles, (except for flights by FAA licensed pilots in FAA registered aircraft which are governed by FAR Part 61 and FAR Part 91) and may be governed in addition by other civil laws and regulations. Persons participating in hang gliding operations under FAR Part 103 are required by law to fly in accordance with FAR Part 103, and in accordance with any other applicable civil laws.
- D. It is further recommended that persons participating in hang gliding be familiar with:
  - 1. USHPA SOP 12-01 (these recommendations).
  - 2. USHPA SOP 12-02 (Pilot Proficiency Program).

### 12-01.02 Operations

- A. Site Operational Rules and Standards. - At flying sites where hang gliding operations are regulated under the USHPA Pilot Proficiency Program, (USHPA SOP 12-02), pilot proficiency requirements and operating rules and procedures will be specified by the USHPA Instructor, Observer or Examiner or other official responsible for regulating use of the site. At sites where the use is by agreement with a city, county, state or federal agency, certain such rules and procedures may carry the force of law.
- B. Instruction. - Pilots flying under the direct supervision of a USHPA certified instructor will have operating limitations prescribed for them by that instructor.

### 12-01.03 Unsupervised Operations by Pilots Below an Intermediate Rating

- A. Student Pilots. - It is recommended that student pilots (without a Beginner rating) not fly except under the direct supervision of a USHPA Certified Instructor.
- B. Beginner Pilots. - It is recommended that beginner pilots (without a Novice rating) flying not under the direct supervision of a USHPA Certified Instructor limit themselves to:
  - 1. Winds of 12 mph or less with gust differential of 5 mph or less.
  - 2. Altitudes of less than 100 feet AGL.
- C. Novice Pilots. - It is recommended that Novice pilots (without an Intermediate rating) flying not under the direct supervision of a USHPA Certified Instructor limit themselves to smooth winds of 18 mph or less and gusty winds of 11 mph or less. It is further recommended that pilots learning to make 360 degree turns do so:

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1. Under the supervision of a USHPA Certified Instructor
2. With a ground clearance of not less than 500 feet.

### **12-01.04 All Pilot Operations**

- A. It is recommended that preplanned landings not be attempted in an area less than 40 feet wide by 100 feet long.
- B. It is recommended that all takeoffs be preceded by a static harness check.
- C. It is recommended that cliff launches in winds over 15 mph be assisted by at least one wire man.

### **12-01.05 Preflight Procedures**

- A. It is recommended that prior to flight the pilot:
  1. Determine the appropriate altitude and surface winds.
  2. Plan the proposed flight, including landing and alternate landing areas.
  3. Pre-flight the glider, giving it a meticulous walk around inspection.
  4. Inspect the landing area for obstructions.
  5. Secure the property owner's permission when using private property.

### **12-01.06 Traffic and Right Of Way Recommendations**

- A. Takeoffs and landings should be made into any significant wind.
- B. When ridge soaring, reversing turns should be made away from the ridge and into the wind.
- C. When ridge soaring, an overtaking glider should pass between the ridge and the overtake glider.
- D. Gliders approaching head on should give way to the right.
- E. Pilots should avoid flying directly above or below another glider in close proximity.
- F. Pilots entering a thermal should circle in the direction established by the first glider to begin circling in the thermal, without regard to the relative altitude of the gliders in the thermal.

### **12-01.07 Equipment**

- A. The Glider
  1. No glider should be delivered for the purpose of unsupervised use to anyone who has not demonstrated the ability to use the glider safely.
  2. It is recommended that all gliders flown meet or exceed HGMA specifications as published for that category.
- B. Other Equipment
  1. It is recommended that pilots wear adequate protective clothing.
  2. It is recommended that pilots wear protective headgear.
  3. It is recommended that pilots utilize flotation gear when there is any likelihood of landing in water.



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4. It is recommended that pilots wear or utilize a reserve parachute for flights at significant altitude
5. It is recommended that pilots utilize a reserve parachute during any event in which there is any significant chance of a structural failure, a midair collision, or a medical emergency.

## 12-01.08 Two-Place Flights

- A. Hang glider flights conducted under FAR 103 are restricted by federal aviation regulation to single place operations, except where they are conducted under the Tandem Exemption granted to the USHPA by the FAA. Such operations conducted under the Tandem Exemption are required by the terms of the exemption to be conducted under the applicable rules and procedures of USHPA SOP 12-02 and its supplements.

## 12-01.09 Aero Towing Operations

- B. Aero towing flights in hang gliders which are not conducted under FAR Part 61 and FAR Part 91 are conducted under the FAA Towing Exemption. Such operations are required by the terms of the exemption to be conducted under the applicable rules and procedures of USHPA SOP 12-02 and its supplements.