

PARACHUTING AFTER A MID-AIR COLLISION

Fatalities from mid-air collisions have decreased in recent years, primarily because more pilots have parachuted successfully.

There are a number of points about parachuting that all glider pilots may want to consider.

Please read on...



1. Your decision to get out

If the glider is uncontrollable, it is likely the decision will have been made for you!

If the glider has been hit in the tail, you may decide to get out even if the glider remains controllable in the immediate aftermath of the collision; the aerodynamic loads may cause a damaged tail to detach.

Wing main spars are very strong; if your wing is damaged and the glider remains controllable you may decide to stay with the glider and land.

2. Getting out

Not easy from a stationary glider on the ground. It will be much more difficult if the broken glider is generating increased G.

Do you know how to get out in this particular glider? Where is the canopy jettison control?

Which way does it move? Should you operate the normal canopy release at the same time as the emergency release, or in a particular sequence?

Are you mentally prepared for taking the correct actions after a collision, on every flight?

Have you ever practiced getting out in an emergency, on the ground? If not, please practice. You need helpers to look after the canopy, and a mattress alongside the cockpit.

How long did it take? Have one of your helpers time you with a stopwatch. Practice again, and do it faster. Note that in a real situation, you may need to push the canopy clear.

Why might practice save your life? 19 collisions above 1500ft since 1998 resulted in 7 fatalities and 14 successful parachute descents. Parachuting saves lives! Preparation is likely to increase your chance of parachuting successfully.