

BGA GUIDANCE RE OVERFLIGHT OF WINCH LAUNCH SITES

Overflights of winch launching sites by powered aircraft including helicopters has been a perennial problem. Whilst legal (the marking of glider sites on aeronautical maps is for information only), these incidents put lives at risk.

The UK Airprox Board has always taken a strong line, but recent reporting trends suggest that the rate has been decreasing. Anecdotal evidence from BGA clubs suggests a different picture, to the extent that one Club has recently proposed raising an Airspace Change Proposal.

The BGA has addressed this issue through publicity and communication. It does not at present have reliable evidence at a National level to support a more formal regulatory approach. But certain clubs clearly have a problem that needs addressing, hence this guidance.

Unless we have robust evidence of a problem at a National level, we are much less likely to get appropriate and effective regulatory action.

An aircraft has overflown our site whilst we were winching. What should we do?

Some clubs have already developed procedures to record and deal with these incidents, and there are some contacts below. If your club hasn't, here are some ideas to consider.

- Capture as much information as possible *immediately*.
 - o Record the details in your club's incident book. Time, direction of flight, estimated altitude, any visible details of the aircraft.
 - o Use Flight Radar 24 or equivalent to try and identify the overflying aircraft.
- Did the overflying aircraft potentially endanger a glider? If so, you should consider reporting an Airprox event.
- *In any case*, please report the incident to the BGA using the [BGA Occurrence Reporting form](#).

When can I report an Airprox? And how?

An Airprox has occurred when, in the opinion of one of the pilots involved, the distance between aircraft combined with their relative positions and speeds was such that safety may have been compromised.

So formally, an Airprox must be reported by a pilot. However, the UK Airprox Board understands the lookout limitations of a winch launching glider and may accept reports from suitably responsible ground observers, such as Instructors or Duty Pilots.

A reported Airprox is analysed in some depth by aviation experts for degree of risk and systemic problems that may have given rise to the incident. As a body funded jointly by the Civil and Military Aviation Authorities, its evidence-based recommendations carry some weight with the regulators. Hence the importance of using this reporting route whenever appropriate.

To report an Airprox, go to the [UKAB airprox reporting webpage](#). It's important that this is done promptly, so that Radio and Radar records can be obtained if appropriate.

It wasn't an Airprox. How do I report the incident to the BGA?

- Use the standard [BGA Occurrence Reporting Form](#)
- Much of the detail on the BGA form will not be necessary for this kind of incident. Use your common sense. The important thing is that the BGA gets a record of what happened, where and when.

What does the BGA intend to do?

Publicity and communication in all available forums will continue.

We will gather evidence from reported Airprox and Incidents. Once we have a suitable evidence base at a National level, we will decide what coordinated national action on behalf of Clubs is necessary.

The CAA has accepted an action to address the issue. That will take time. Please continue to be extremely vigilant.

Education

You can use this [BGA supplied detail reproduced by Flyer magazine](#) to promote the issues among local flying clubs.

And you can share our [winch cable warning e-poster](#)

Thanks.

BGA

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