

COVID19 - preparing for restarting flying (as of 8 May 20)

Much now relies on the Govt lifting travelling restrictions. We may learn more in the next few days. It is important to note that there are no guarantees of restrictions easing in the immediate future.

Meanwhile, we should of course be prepared for the day we can fly again!

When gliding can restart, it seems obvious that a mix of social distancing, use of masks, regular hand-washing and cleaning of shared equipment will be required for the foreseeable future. Clubs may want to consider how they might obtain as soon as practical, including through their club members, the necessary hand washing resources for hangar and launch point use as well as suitable wipes, etc to clean glider cockpits and wingtips. It will also be worth thinking about how to limit exposure, including limiting shared use of equipment.

There are a number of known considerations that could be addressed in advance, some of which will require flexibility and carefully considered changes to some existing club processes. They include:

Equipment

Airfield surfaces, aircraft, and launching equipment have all been unused for an extended period. Is there a club plan and activity to ensure they are fit for purpose? Are there any aircraft maintenance issues or ARC renewals that need to be addressed?

Fuel

Club aircraft fuel supplies have not been used for some time. Has the club fuel been checked recently? Are club pilots familiar with pre-flight fuel testing requirements?

Filling club operational roles

Every club will have experienced members who are in a particularly vulnerable group that may choose to stay away for a while. How will the club fill key operational roles at the club?

Access to club facilities

Going forward, close gathering of people needs to be avoided. So it's unlikely that club house facilities other than toilets/washrooms can be used. Is there a plan to reduce the amount of indoor use and the amount of door handles to be opened (touched) to provide access to toilets/washrooms?

Is there somewhere where members can take a break/eat a packed lunch under cover while social distancing? Can club parachutes and batteries be accessed for use in club gliders with a minimum number of people involved?

Recency and currency

Every club has a wide range of experience and competence among its pilots. Has the club CFI thought through a risk-based and supportive plan to help pilots to get flying again as soon as possible? [This BGA guidance will be helpful to CFIs and others making decisions about club flying.](#)

Of course, many of our more experienced pilots are hungry to fly cross country. Encouraging those pilots to adopt a low risk approach to restarting flying is important. Examples include building up experience before facing a challenging cross-country and practicing a turbo start near the airfield. Have pilots considered how they will manage an off-field landing, including distancing from landowners, the public and retrieve crew?

Keeping it legal

Those who are required to be licenced to fly will need to check the relevant rating validity is either in date, or in the case of rolling recency, the required number of hours and launches etc have been flown. [The CAA has issued exemptions which extend validity periods or extend the rolling recency period.](#)

Good neighbours

Any housing near your airfield will have experienced a very quiet few weeks with almost no aviation taking place. A gliding club that suddenly bursts into life will become very obvious! Has the CFI and tug master thought about how to mitigate noise issues? When the time comes, is there a way of engaging diplomatically with locals to ensure that they are aware that following the lifting of restrictions, etc, the club will be carefully restarting its operation and they can expect to see aircraft again?

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Further BGA detail regarding the practical aspects of gliding during the ongoing COVID19 pandemic will follow as soon as the Government updates its requirements as described in the opening paragraph.

(as sent to BGA member club Chairmen, Secretaries and CFIs on 8th May 2020).