

DEVON AND SOMERSET GLIDING CLUB



GROUND OPS TRAINING HANDBOOK

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Introduction

1. The Requirement.

“Ground Ops” skills are essential to allow safe application of the wide range of tasks that comprise each day’s gliding operations. Some can be learned fairly quickly by “on the job” supervised practice and these are referred to in this Handbook as **Basic Training Tasks**. More complex tasks call for structured training, referred to below as **Advanced Training Tasks**. This Introduction lists the training tasks and requirements and identifies the trainers and authorizers. More detailed guidance for those individuals authorised to conduct the training is contained in Part One (Training Notes) of this Handbook. Part Two contains brief instructions on how the training is recorded.

It is worth reading this handbook in conjunction with the **Operations Manual**, which, although aimed at pilots, necessarily contains some reference to Ground Operations (such as General Site Care; Launch Marshall Duties; Care of Aircraft and Launch Equipment and Trailers)

Club members who are 16 years and over can participate fully in all Ground Operation tasks, including training other members, and (where appropriate) authorizing the trainee. There are some Ground Operation restrictions on club members who are under 16 years old. Please check the sections below on “Young Club Members”.

2. The Basic Training Tasks

- B1 Introductory Safety Brief for new members, including Launch Point Activities.
- B2 Ground-handling and Parking of gliders on-site.
- B3/4 Driving Club Vehicles (excluding tractors) and towing gliders.
- B5 Cable Retrieving.
- B6 Setting-up the Launch Point for daily operations.

3. The Advanced Training Tasks

- A1 Log-keeping & Operation of the Launch Control..
- A2 Movement of gliders from/into glider hangar.
- A3 Ground Equipment D.I., storage and refuelling.
- A4 Driving tractors.
- A5 Winch driving, including all elements of daily procedures.
- A6 Duty Launch Marshal.

4. Young Club Members

We greatly appreciate the enthusiasm of our youngest members in wanting to participate fully in club activities by helping out with the Ground Operations. Club safety concerns, and the requirement that we have a thorough training regime, mean that we have to place some restrictions on what our youngest members can do:

14 years and over, but under 16:

Members who are 14 years and over, but under 16, can participate fully in all basic and advanced tasks except for DLM duty (task A6). *[See section A6 for criteria for this task]*. Once they have been authorized to do so, members in this age group can perform ground operations tasks unsupervised.

However, members in this age group cannot themselves authorize other members in basic tasks B3/4 (Driving Club Vehicles & Towing Gliders); B5 (Cable Retrieving) and B6 (Setting up the Launch Point Vehicle). These tasks must only be signed off by an authorized member who has a full driving licence.

Authorizers must satisfy themselves that trainees are **fully trained in all aspects of a task** prior to authorization unless special dispensation is granted by the Ground Operations Training Manager.

12 years and over, but under 14:

Club members under 14 years old may carry out **Basic** Ground Operations tasks on the airfield, providing they are **supervised*** whilst doing so, by a member (16 years and over) who is authorized in the task.

Members under 14 cannot have ground operations tasks authorized until they reach their 14th birthday (so they must remain **under supervision** until they are 14 years old). Neither can they authorize other club members in Ground Operation activities.

Note: “**Supervision**” requires that in all tasks involving club vehicles, the supervisor remains in the vehicle with the trainee. The remaining basic task (ground handling of gliders) can be supervised by someone in attendance at the launch point.

Please note that we regret that ground operations tasks may not be undertaken by any person under the age of 12.

5. Authority to conduct training and certify competence, ie “sign off”.

(1) Basic Tasks (B1 to B6). Given the constraints on the youngest members (above), once a club member is qualified for any given Basic Task, he/she will automatically be authorised to train **and certify** the competence of other members in that same task. It is therefore very important that a trainer ensures that the trainee has acquired sufficient experience to then train and authorise someone else.

(2) Advanced Tasks (A1 to A6). Any authorized club member can demonstrate the task, but actual training and subsequent authorization for advanced tasks must be by an **nominated trainer/authorizer** . The trainer / authorizers for each advanced task are shown in the training area on the club website and are also with the paper copy of the Ground Ops Handbook in the clubroom.

6. Record of Authorisations.

When a member has been trained and authorized in a new Ground Operation skill, the authorizer will complete the relevant section of the Ground Operations Training Card signing with name, signature and date of authorization. The card will then be left in the “In” box in the clubhouse briefing room so that the training record may be updated.

Individual training progress in Ground Operations will be shown in a spreadsheet linked from the DGSC website:

[Members Area >> Training >> Members' status for ground operations tasks.](#)

Part 1. Training Notes

1. Purpose.

The purpose of this part of the Handbook is to provide detailed guidance in narrative form on the training points that need to be covered for each of the Training Tasks listed in the Introduction.

Trainees learning a new task should discuss the points below with the trainer. If something has been missed during training – or you are not sure, please ask.

These notes will also help the trainer to refresh his own mind and thus prepare thoroughly in advance of the training session. The Tasks are listed in two Groups, namely The Basic Training Tasks B1 to B6 (Paragraphs 2.a to 2.e below), and The Advanced Training Tasks A1 to A6 (Paragraphs 3.a to 3.f below).

2. The Basic Training Tasks

2a. Task B1: Introductory Safety Brief & Launch Point Activities.

For existing Club members, it can be easily forgotten that most new members will also be new to gliding, with no knowledge whatsoever of the way a gliding club functions or of the many tasks that have to be carried out to launch gliders. Therefore, each new member should be given a formal, introductory site safety briefing, including an awareness of general launch point activities.

B1.1 A description of the site layout, including our various buildings and their uses, trailer and caravan parking, location of our four conventional launch points and winch cable routes. Also describe the bridle and foot-path route and legal site access for horse riders and other pedestrians.

B1.2 Club Handbooks and Manuals. Where they are kept – and what they contain.

B1.3 Car parking – where it is safe/permitted to park. Emphasise low speed at all times when driving on site. Remember not to lock cars left on the airfield.

B1.4 Awareness of general vehicle and glider movements on site and the necessity for alertness at all times, especially when crossing the approach/landing areas. Emphasize that gliders can land from many directions, and that we are not limited to “conventional circuits”. Remember that we have powered aircraft on site and attention must also be paid to their movements; they have nasty propellers on the front!

B1.5 Launch Point Activities – a thorough description of launch point activities; cover likely vehicle movements, glider launch queues and launch procedures. Explain the main potential risk areas, e.g. immediately in front of the launch queues. When training on launching gliders remember:

- Receiving cables from the “Cable Disco”, and giving the retrieve driver the “all clear”.
- Dragging the cable over to the glider to be launched. ‘Chute in front of the glider!
- Difference in weak links – so the correct link colour (don’t rely on the strop).
- Difference between aerotow and winch hooks.
- How to do “cable release checks”.
- Prior to hooking on have a look at the glider. Make sure that wing and tail dollies have been removed. On two seat gliders being flown solo, look to see that the rear canopy is closed and locked and that the straps have been correctly stowed.
- Hooking on: If the person connecting the cable to the glider has not heard the pilot state “brakes and canopy closed and locked” prior to “cable on please”, **a request should be made to the pilot that they check “airbrakes and canopy locked?” before the cable is attached.**
- Give the cable a good steady pull to make sure it is correctly attached. Show the pilot the weak link and say **“Cable on and secure; Black (etc) Link”**
- Ensure a good look-out in **front** (checking for obstacles etc. that the pilot may not be able to see) **above and behind**. Don’t forget to check both downwind legs. If clear, call **“All clear above and behind”**.
- Correct calling and clear signalling for “taking up slack” and “all out”. Visibility to pilot and Launch Control. Standing clear of launching glider – and cables!
- The “STOP” signal – and who can use it.
- Wing running (keep the wings level); use downwind wing in cross winds.
- Differences between winch and aerotow launches.
- How to correctly repair a broken weak link.

2b. Task B2: Ground-handling and Parking of gliders on-site.

Whilst most gliders are fairly robust aircraft, their design and shape mean that it is very easy for damage to occur unless adequate care is taken during ground-handling and when 'parking' them. Although many of the basic needs are described under the "care of aircraft, launch equipment and trailers" in the **DSGC Operations Manual**, it is nevertheless important that the relevant training includes, as a minimum, attention to the following points:-

B2.1 General handling requirements, i.e. what parts of the airframe can be handled, pulled, pushed or lifted (in the case of wingtips and/or rear fuselage) and, equally important, what components must not have loads applied to them in any way, e.g. canopies, tail-planes and control surfaces.

B2.2 The appropriate ways of moving gliders by hand and by vehicle tow. The minimum number of people required and influence of wind direction and strength and associated gusts. Which launch hook to use when towing (only the winch hook will back release). Raise canopy to release tow (don't risk damage by trying to reach the release knob through the DV panel).

B2.3 The importance of never leaving canopies raised if the pilot is not present. Assist pilots with canopies in windy (gusty) conditions. If rain stops play – ensure that any open DV panels on parked gliders are closed.

B2.4 The procedure for parking gliders safely; factors that must be taken into account include weather conditions and wind strength, proximity to other aircraft or obstacles, reasons for parking cross-wind and varying means of securing different glider types. **Be careful when placing tyres on glider wings.**

B2.5 Procedure to be followed in the event of damage occurring or being suspected.

2c. Task B3/4: Driving Club Vehicles, excluding Tractors, and Towing Club Gliders

Driving

When teaching someone to drive a club vehicle – ensure that the training takes place in a quiet and unrestricted area of the field, well away from parked gliders, trailers and normal flying activities. Each of our club vehicles has its own unique characteristics which must be explained and demonstrated, together with the factors which constitute 'care' of the vehicle and which, if ignored, could lead to increased maintenance or even damage. It is therefore important that the following points are included in training:-

B3/4.1 Each of the club vehicles requires individual briefing and training, as differing features and driving techniques are involved. Include gear selection and changing, gear ratios (where appropriate), driving in reverse, use of mirrors, on-board radio.

B3/4.2 Emphasise the need for a cautious and considerate driving 'style'. Some of our Club vehicles are both heavy and powerful and all have the potential for producing accidents if treated with less than adequate care.

B3/4.3 Explain the primary uses of each vehicle together with the normal operating methods and routes followed for the routine tasks. The various site ground conditions will have an influence on routes and driving speeds. Remember **care of the vehicle!!**

B3/4.4 Never tow a trailer without attaching the safety wire to the tow hitch.

B3/4.5 The Gator can be "jerky" when engaging drive in forward and reverse. When attaching a trailer to the Gator it is safer to stop near the trailer and then make the attachment by "manhandling" the trailer, rather than by backing the Gator onto the trailer drawbar.

B3/4.6 To prevent the chance of a winch cable falling on a vehicle or vehicle / glider combination, whenever possible drive up the field on the upwind side of the winch cables. If a glider has landed long, and downwind of the cables, the retrieve may require a vehicle / glider combination to cross cables at the winch end of the field. **Crossing the cables should only be done after radio communication between winch or LC and retrieve to ensure the cables are "clear" and can be crossed safely.**

Towing Gliders

The practice of towing a glider on site, using a vehicle, is repeated many times during each day's activities. This may be for moving the glider from the glider hangar/trailer parking point to be at or near the launch point, or for 'retrieving' a glider which has just landed. In the case of Club gliders, the tow is always made using a tow rope. Training must include, as a minimum, the following points of attention:-

B3/4.7 The vehicle driver is primarily responsible for the safety of the tow and must be totally familiar with the vehicle in use.

B3/4.8 The tow-rope should be attached to the winch hook (the aerotow hook cannot back release) and should not be attached to the glider until the tow is about to begin. To do so earlier presents the potential for a serious accident. **Only use prepared club tow ropes with tost rings for connection to the glider.**

B3/4.9 Towing a glider using a tow rope requires two “crew” with the glider. One person on the wing “steering”, with the other at the cockpit, ready to steady the glider on a down slope – and prepared to release the tow rope when required or in an emergency.

B3/4.10 Ensure that both “crew” can be seen (in the mirrors is fine) during towing. They may be inaudible over the engine, so **watch for signals**.

B3/4.11 All towing is to be at a comfortable, medium walking pace (about 2-3 mph) for those ‘manning’ the glider. Explain the problems of being too slow or too fast!

B3/4.12 The driver must pay frequent attention to the relative position of the glider and maintain ample clearance from obstacles (half a glider wing-span on each side). Ensure there is no interference with gliders launching or landing and stick to the towing route agreed with the glider pilot. If in any doubt at any time - **STOP**.

B3/4.13 When towing a glider down the field, check for the location of the cable retrieve vehicle returning cables to the launch point. **Give way to the cable retrieve Disco!**

B3/4.14 After a launch, do not cross the remaining cable unless you know it is “clear”. If necessary call Launch Control on the radio to check.

B3/4.15 When towing a glider to the launch point, be alert to the glider being deliberately swung out-of-line before the tow-rope is released. Again, if there is the slightest risk, **STOP**.

B3/4.16 At the completion of each tow, when the tow-rope is released from the glider, stop and reel in / coil up the tow rope before driving away. ‘Trailing ropes’ have been known to snag wing-tips or other obstacles!!

2d. Task B5: Cable Retrieving.

Although “Cable Retrieving” appears to be a quite straightforward process, there are a number of important elements involved and it is essential that these are understood totally, prior to a new member being ‘let loose’ with the retrieve vehicle. For training purposes, the necessary ‘points of attention’ may be summarised as follows:-

B5.1 The driver must be authorised to drive club vehicles.

B5.2 It is vital to emphasise the **total responsibility** that the retrieve driver has for the cable retrieving task.

B5.3 Essential safety issues to be included in training relate to:-

- Smooth operation of retrieve vehicle – taking up the slack in the cables at the beginning of the retrieve – and gradual slowing down to prevent winch cable drum over-run.
- Communication with the winch driver and Launch Control.
- Need for and mandatory use of towing ‘weak links’.
- Cables to be ‘pulled out’ in a straight line – explain ‘why’.
- What to do if a towing weak link breaks. Potential risks to the winch driver! The importance of communication with the winch driver during reconnection and subsequent pull out.
- The necessity of a good lookout at all times during the retrieve. If a glider is going to land across the cables being towed out, ensure they are stopped when the glider crosses them.
- Dealing with approaching gliders and tug during cable retrieve – importance of slowing down or stopping, not turning out-of-line.
- Importance of slowing down gradually on approaching the launch point.
- Ensure that the cables are released completely at end of the retrieve. Whilst the helpers at the launch point should advise the cables are “clear” – the ultimate responsibility is the drivers!
- Careful choice of return route to winch, giving way to approaching gliders and tug. Keep a good lookout if turning across the field.
- Safe parking behind winch when it is launching gliders.
- Never approach a cable at the winch, either on foot or in the retrieve vehicle, if it is still “live”. Wait until the winch is in neutral and the cable has stopped.

B5.4 If the field is wet, there is a danger of creating muddy furrows from winch to launch point. Vary the line slightly on each cable run. Just moving sideways by one tyre width will significantly reduce the wear on the field.

2e. Task B6: Setting-up the Launch Control (LC) for daily operations.

The preferred vehicle for towing the Launch Control is the Supercat "Disco". Always have someone to guide reversing of the combination out of the Ground Vehicle hangar. Don't forget to DI the Disco prior to moving the Launch Control.

B6.1 Before getting into the tow vehicle to move off, check:: Electricity supply is unplugged and stowed securely; Tow hitch is securely locked onto the ball; Brake is off (handle down); Jockey Wheels are both up; The contents of both cabins are safe and secure (no unsecured laptop on the desk); Windsock mast is fully down and secure; Both doors are fastened shut; Rear Step is folded up.

B6.2 Check that you have the flight logging computer and mobile phone, before tow out!

B6.3 Leave the Launch Control outside the hangar until Duty Instructor or Duty Launch Marshal has decided upon **precise** required location on the field. Use as much hard road as possible, and do not exceed max towing speed of 10 mph.

B6.4 Try to tow LC into position in the field forwards (without reversing). Use correct procedure for unhooking from Disco, and correct use of jockey wheel. Use the built-in spirit level to get the LC as level as possible. Ensure handbrake is on (handle up).

B6.5 Items requiring attention at launch point may be summarised as:

- Connection of communication cable at remote socket point (use the "MAIN" socket on the telecom connection box). Telecoms boxes are located in manholes at the SE and aerotow launch points and are otherwise on posts around the perimeter. In the two manholes the "MAIN" connection is the open (uncovered) socket.
- Connect the windsock and raise the mast into position.
- Position winch cable marker cones. For a double launch line the cones will probably be further out than you think! – the first cone should be about 50 paces from the LC.
- Erect safety chain (fence spikes and red/white plastic chain).
- Connect computer to power cable, switch master-switch to 'ON' (LED indicator will light), and connect anemometer USB cable to comm. port. Switch computer on. Logsys (the logging program) will boot up automatically.
- Check comms with winch. **If no-one is present in the winch, and the winch is connected to the telecom loop, the green ("Line OK") LED will light if you press the "Buzz Winch" button.** If the LED does not light – or only lights faintly – there is a problem with the circuit.
- If Duty Instructor present, select appropriate coloured 'rating' flag. If parachuting from Dunkeswell – fly appropriate flag.

B6.6 **In the event of a thunderstorm** close enough to the club to stop flying – lower the windsock mast and disconnect the comms lead from the LC. A lightning strike on the field may cause serious damage to the electronics if the comms lead is left connected.

B6.7 Shut-down at end of day's flying is more or less a reverse of the above. After disconnection of comms and lowering of windsock mast etc, check no personal equipment left on the ground by the LC and reconnect the Disco.. Raise the rear step and check backdoor shut. Remove the computer, mobile phone, personal equipment and any parachutes left in LC. Tidy inside; empty the waste-bin, and on return to the hangar ensure the charging cable is plugged in and the battery charger lights are all "on" (showing red on front wall of cabin).

B6.8 Ensure that the computer and mobile phone are plugged into their chargers in the clubhouse (and are charging!).

3. The Advanced Training Tasks

3a. Task A1: Log-keeping & Operation of Launch Control (LC) facilities.

Our Launch Control forms the focal point of ground operations at the launch point, as it is the link to many functions, i.e. log-keeping, ground communications, launch point equipment storage, reporting point and on-site briefings. Its use during each day, in particular for the first two functions, requires both practice and authorisation. Here are some important training points:-

A1.1 A thorough, practised ability to use our computer-based log-keeping (flight recording) system is very necessary, **and the trainee should have read the “Logsys User Guide” (available in paper copy in the LC – and on the DSGC website)**. Also, knowledge of the flight recording ‘back-up’ system, i.e. the hand-written, paper log-book, should be explained. Remember to emphasise the **legal** and financial aspects of correct log-keeping (flight recording)

A1.2 A member learning this task must understand the ‘process’ of glider launching and the order in which the various elements are carried out. **Basic tasks B1 & B2 are required precursors to being trained in this advanced task.**

A1.3 Our comms. systems have to be understood, with special attention given to the formalities that we employ in communicating with the winch driver for launch instructions, *and the use of radio communications with both air and ground stations.*

A1.4 Ensure clear commands to the winch when launching (it can be very noisy in the winch!). Correct sequence of launch calls: - “Glider Type” – “Cable” – “Take Up Slack” – and “All Out”.

A1.5 Monitor the launch until the winch driver can see the glider, leaving the comms “open”. In an emergency call “STOP STOP” so that the winch driver can hear the command above the noise of the winch engine at full throttle! Do NOT talk to anyone else at this point of the launch. (If the winch driver hears you talking, he may think you are telling him to STOP!). If the cable has fallen in a position where the winch driver cannot see it, advise that it is “clear to retrieve” – or to wait until it is clear.

A1.6 If a glider has landed up the field, and it may not be safe to commence the next launch – **delay the launch** until the winch driver confirms (or you can see) that it is safe to continue. If necessary, hold the launch until a retrieve vehicle clears the glider from potential danger from a falling winch cable.

A1.7 The necessity for a good look out and wide-ranging attention to gliders and powered aircraft taking off and landing.

A1.8 If necessary, warn the cable retrieve vehicle of impending launches of powered aircraft. It is best to hold the cables at the winch during a tug / glider combination launch.

A1.9 Be watchful for any unsafe acts in the vicinity of the launch point. If necessary, use the tannoy. Ensure the remaining cable is not moved or crossed until the winch driver has given the “Cable Clear”.

A1.10 If the parachute club at Dunkeswell is operating – ensure that the “parachute” flag is flying from the windsock mast.

A1.11 Close collaboration with the Duty Launch Marshal and Duty Instructor is vital.

A1.12 To maintain adequate attention to the task, training needs to include comment on factors such as alertness, constant observation, resisting distractions, look out for unusual incidents or ‘emergencies’. If tiredness sets in, get a relief log-keeper!

A1.13 Knowledge of the various items of equipment kept in the Launch Control is a useful addition during training.

3b. Task A2: Movement of gliders from/into glider hangar.

This task has the potential for causing serious damage to one or more gliders. To make best use of the space in our hangar, gliders have to be 'packed' in a methodical, careful manner, paying great attention to proximity of various wings, TE tubes, tail planes and other 'willing obstructions'!!

As a general rule, only Instructors and other senior Club pilots are authorised to supervise the task. Training matters requiring attention are:-

A2.1 Ensure that only one person takes charge of the task. Two or more calling instructions will be a recipe for damage!

A2.2 Ensure that there are sufficient members present to carry out the task safely. A minimum of three is usually required to ensure adequate control.

A2.3 It is important to ensure that each person knows what he/she must do. Employ only those who have sufficient experience to know where or where not to push/pull. Remember particularly the cost of new canopies and emphasise the essential control when holding a wing-tip during each glider movement.

A2.4 At the end of flying, ensure mud is washed from the gliders, and that if it has been raining - that the gliders have been wiped off.

A2.5 Finally, if necessary, turn powered instruments off, turn the master switch "off"; remove the batteries, any ballast that has been fitted, any parachutes (and parachute bags). Check cockpit pockets for any personal equipment that may be left behind.

3c. Task A3: Ground Equipment D.I., Storage and Refuelling.

(Note: This task does NOT include D.I. or refuelling Winches or Tractors)

The serviceability and general condition of our ground equipment is of great importance to us and especially so to the small group of members whose expertise and commitment keeps the equipment in running order. It is therefore vital that each item is checked thoroughly before being put into use on each day, and it follows that an adequate knowledge of relevant daily inspections, equipment removal and storage, refuelling and safety factors is essential.

A3.1 Details of complete D.I. are required for each item before starting or moving it. This must be done on a daily basis without fail; our equipment is subject to quite a rigorous work cycle and so careful attention is an absolute 'must'. For each vehicle check:

- Check floor under vehicles for obvious significant leaks of oil or coolant.
- Engine Oil and Coolant (be sure to use the correct antifreeze)
- Clutch / brake / automatic transmission oil levels.
- Condition / tension of alternator / steering pump belts.
- Visually check wheels and tyres.
- Fuel tank level.

A3.2 Authorisation to drive each type of vehicle involved.

A3.3 Procedure to be followed if any item is found to be unserviceable.

A3.4 Potential risks and safe method of removing vehicles from hangar. Check ability to drive vehicles in reverse, with added attention to skill required to drive vehicle / trailer combinations in reverse. Correct storage of equipment at the end of each day's flying (e.g. Launch Control battery charger connected and charging lights in cabin are on).

A3.5 Ensure any electric vehicles are plugged in to the charger, and the charger is on.

A3.6 Correct procedure for refuelling diesel vehicles. Obtaining and returning refuelling point key. Correct entries in fuel logbook. **NB. Refuelling the (gas) Skylaunch winch is covered in section A5.**

A3.7 Essential safety in opening/closing equipment hangar doors. We don't want any 'trapped fingers'!! Opening and closing the doors carefully and smoothly also ensures they will not jump the bottom track! If they do – please get help to lift the door back onto the track – don't leave it for the next shift!

3d. Task A4: Driving tractors.

Our Club tractors are, for most new members, completely alien vehicles, therefore requiring particular training before authority to drive them is given. Bearing in mind that the main concept of tractor design is for agricultural use, the essential dedicated features need to be understood before safe driving can be assured. So the following points need to be borne in mind during training:-

- A4.1 Training in driving one of the tractors includes the special D.I. that these “different” vehicles require.
- A4.2 No-one is to drive the tractors unless under training – or having been authorized to do so.
- A4.3 Thorough initial briefing to include the expected driving technique, (principles that are ‘foreign’ to most drivers): gear and gear ratio selection, individual rear wheel braking, hand-throttle, possibility of over-steer. Driving in reverse when towing..
- A4.4 Run through correct operation of other towed implements and attachments.
- A4.5 Point out the particularly serious danger of positioning oneself between the tractor and attachment during hook-up manoeuvres.
- A4.6 During driving practice, emphasise cautious and considerate driving and the particular risks associated with over-speeding, when a tractor can become far less stable.
- A4.7 The attachment and use of other equipment, such as grass-cutters, is more specialised and will require additional training.

3e. Task A5: Winch driving, including all elements of daily procedures.

Although all the ground operations tasks are, without doubt, important in getting gliders launched, winch driving is one of the most specialized, and requires the greatest depth of training and practice. Training needs to include all the various elements involved, from reversing the winch/tow vehicle combination out of the equipment hangar when preparing for flying to parking it back in the hangar at the end of the day's operations. So, training should include the following items, although not essentially in the order shown.

Note: Detailed winch driving instructions are provided in the [Winch Drivers Handbook](#) (on the DSGC website and paper copy in the Skylaunch winch). Trainees will have been expected to have read this handbook prior to task authorization.

A5.1 Initial 'setting-up' procedure for the winch, to include –

- Removal from equipment hangar; thorough D.I. (a D.I. Checklist is kept in the cab). Check safety chain / wire connected to tow-hitch and wheel brake is "off".
- Correct refuelling of Skylaunch winch using the LPG gas fuelling plant.
- Check winch starts OK; Check comms head-set is in the cab Tow winch to required location, having checked with Duty Instructor. It is important to define safe towing routes and also site areas to avoid (side slopes, rough ground). Whenever possible tow down the "spine" of the field.
- Establish the winch ready for launching, emphasising alignment, jacking-up procedure, comms connected and tested.

A5.2 Normal winch launching techniques, almost certainly requiring several sessions, to achieve competence in varying weather conditions and understand associated matters such as launch sequence, preparation for cable retrieves, launch failures and **cable repairs**. Emphasise safety matters such as alertness, look-out, ensuring onlookers are safely behind the winch; avoiding distraction and fatigue.

A5.3 If a falling winch cable lands close to any person, vehicle or glider, **do not retrieve the cable** until the obstacle has been cleared. If a glider has landed "up the field" do not accept the next launch from the Launch Control if there is any concern that it is too close to the cable – or that a broken cable or strop may land on it. Broken cables can travel a long way down wind!

A5.4 Whenever possible, gliders should be towed back to the launch point on the upwind side of the cables which may require a vehicle / glider combination to cross cables at the winch end of the field. **Crossing the cables should only be done after radio communication between winch and retrieve.**

A5.5 Enter any cable breaks, or cable replacements in the relevant section of the Winch Logbook (kept in the cab).

A5.6 Correct "Closing-down" procedure at end of day's operations, to include-

- Disconnect and reel-in comms cable.
- Disconnection and stowage of earthing rod and cable.
- Chocks raised, drogue 'chutes stowed, winch attached to tow vehicle and safety chain/wire fitted, wheel brakes off.
- Tow winch back to equipment hangar, again using a defined route and remembering very low speed essential on down-hill slope. Park winch in hangar. **Ensure master switch is "off"**.

A5.7 Specific training relating to winch towing, to include –

- Practice reversing vehicle / winch combination.
- Practice at 'backing very slowly' onto winch towing attachment.
- Emphasise the additional great care needed when towing the winch, with particular regard to low speed (very low when leaving and approaching the hangars area) and pre-selection of the towing route.

A5.8 **In the event of a thunderstorm** close enough to the club to stop flying – disconnect the comms lead from the winch. A lightning strike on the field may do serious damage to the communications equipment.

3f. Task A6: Duty Launch Marshal.

It is a club requirement that all solo pilots aged 16 and over join the DLM rota.

Without a DLM to assist in the organization of weekend flying, efficient operations will be impaired. This is an essential and worthwhile task and is potentially thoroughly rewarding. It is one that requires assistance from other club members (you cannot do it all on your own!). If you ask - most members will be happy to help.

For a member asked to join the DLM rota, the best and simplest training routine must be to 'read and inwardly digest' the detailed notes detailed in the **DSGC Operations Manual**, and then practise the required duties under the guidance of an approved Trainer / Authorizer.

The over-riding factors that need to be emphasised are:-

- A6.1 Maintain liaison with the Duty Instructor and Launch Controller.
- A6.2 Accept the responsibility of the task and 'run the ship' in a thoughtful and courteous manner. Virtually all Club members will help willingly with all the tasks, if asked.
- A6.3 Monitor the flying lists and ground tasks (winching, retrieving, logging etc.) and try to maintain fairness in sharing the general workload.
- A6.4 On busy days try to ensure that gliders at the head of the launch queue are ready to launch on receipt of the cable.
- A6.5 If flying is to continue over lunch – encourage those who have volunteered to assist to have their lunch either earlier or later – so that flying is not disrupted.
- A6.6 Be aware of any trial flights due during the period of duty. Introduce the visitor to their pilot and ensure the Launch Controller is aware of required information.
- A6.7 Practise attention to safety issues; in particular, be alert to presence of visitors, their children and dogs, which may become a problem! Enlist the help of other Club members, where appropriate.
- A6.8 Enjoy the experience; it's not nearly as onerous as it sounds!!

Whilst the DLM rota is limited to solo members aged 16 years and over, younger members (14 years and over) may "practise" DLM tasks under the supervision of an authorized member.

Part 2 – Record of Training and Authorisation.

1. Only those individuals who have been authorised, having received appropriate training, will be permitted to undertake **unsupervised** any of the activities described in this Handbook.
2. Authority to undertake activities unsupervised is to be recorded in a spreadsheet showing all training tasks and listing all trained and authorized club members. Access to this spreadsheet will be from the DSGC website (“Members Area” – “Training” folder). Newly authorized members should place their updated Training Card in the Ground Operations “In” tray to allow the spreadsheet to be updated and kept up to date.
3. The appropriate Authoriser (see page 2, paragraph 5) is to record authorisation (i.e. “sign off”) by initialling, signing and dating the Ground Operations Training Card for the relevant Training Task.
4. The basic rules governing the authority to train and certify competence are set out on page 2 of this Handbook, paragraph 5. These rules are amplified below.
5. With the exception of the restrictions on our youngest members, completion of training on a **Basic Task** signifies competence and authorisation to deliver training in that task, **as well as to declare trainees competent, (i.e. to “sign off” others).**

The **Advanced Tasks** must, by their very nature, be handled in a more differentiated manner. Authorization signifies competence to undertake the task unsupervised but will **not** also indicate the right to train or authorize others. Whilst any authorized member may **demonstrate** the task to an untrained member, only specifically nominated individuals will be authorised to deliver training **and** to certify competence, i.e. “sign off”,

A list is maintained of all individuals who are formally qualified to **train and authorise** for each of the Advanced Tasks. The list is on the DSGC website (training area) and is also in hard copy with the paper Ground Operations Handbook in the clubroom.

6. When a member has been trained and authorized in a new Ground Operation skill, and the authorizer has completed the relevant section of the Ground Operations Training Card (signing with name, signature and date of authorization) the card should then be left in the “In” box in the clubhouse briefing room so that the training record may be updated.

Individual training progress in Ground Operations will be shown in a spreadsheet linked from the DGSC website:

[Members Area >> Training >> Members' status for ground operations tasks.](#)