



The United States Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association, Inc.

USHPA Basic Safety Requirements

Standard Operating Procedure 12-01
Last Amended October, 2016

12-01.01 General

- A. Definition - Hang gliders, paragliders, and mini wings are defined as gliders capable of being carried, foot launched, and foot landed solely by the energy and use of the pilots legs.
- B. Hang gliding, paragliding, and mini-wing 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, paragliding, and mini-wing 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.
- C. It is recommended that persons participating in hang gliding, paragliding, and mini-wing 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, paragliding, and mini-wing 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 officials 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 Instructor will have operating limitations prescribed for them by that Instructor.
- C. It is recommended that preplanned landings not be attempted in an area less than 40 feet wide by 100 feet long.
- D. For hang glider pilots, establish being hooked in just prior to launch using some static harness check method. For paragliding and mini-wing pilots, establish being hooked in just prior to launch by performing a complete harness leg and chest buckle check, and a line check.
- E. It is recommended that cliff launches in winds over 15 mph be assisted by at least one wire assist person.
- F. At flying sites where hang gliding, paragliding, and mini-wing operations are NOT regulated under the USHPA Pilot Proficiency Program:
 - 1. USHPA members will observe all rules and regulations that apply to any flying site they may use, both at home and abroad.
 - 2. Members are asked to support the USHPA Mission Statement, section D, **Flying sites:** "USHPA will support the development of new flying sites and the preservation of existing sites".



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12-01.03 Preflight Procedures

- A. It is recommended that prior to flight, the pilot shall:
 - 1. Determine that surface winds and winds aloft are within safe margins.
 - 2. Plan the entire 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.

12-01.04 Recommended Traffic and Right of Way Conventions

- A. The primary right-of-way convention is that all pilots must “See and Avoid” as set out in FAR Part 103.13:
 - a. Each person operating an ultralight vehicle shall maintain vigilance so as to see and avoid aircraft and shall yield the right-of-way to all aircraft.
 - b. No person may operate an ultralight vehicle in a manner that creates a collision hazard with respect to any aircraft.
- B. Flight of hang gliders and paragliders under FAR Part 103 is only available to individuals who have assumed all responsibility for their own personal safety. See FAA Advisory Circular AC-103-7.
- C. To assist pilots in seeing and avoiding other aircraft, and potentially reduce the risk of collision that is inherent in the sport, USHPA recommends that pilots flying a particular launch/flight/landing area agree upon and utilize the following right-of-way conventions when flying in the proximity of other unpowered hang gliders or paragliders. It may be helpful to pilots flying a particular launch/flight/landing area, for those managing the area to make it known to those pilots that these or other conventions have been agreed upon.
- D. Recommended Conventions to help reduce the inherent risk of collision:
 - 1. When traveling opposing directions, pass to the right. Yield to the pilot on the “inside” with the ridge to their right.
 - 2. Gliders with greater altitude yield to pilots who are lower.
 - 3. The first pilot to enter a thermal sets the turn direction regardless of altitude. When entering a thermal with other pilots already in it, yield to them.
 - 4. Clear all turns. Look for other gliders that are within your intended flight path and that appear to be headed towards your intended flight path.
 - 5. When overtaking another glider going the same direction as you, pass between the other glider and the ridge, when practical. Consider turning around instead of passing where passing puts you in close proximity to another glider.

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6. Pilots on the ground yield to gliders already in the air. Pilots launching should wait for the airspace to be sufficiently clear that they can see, be seen, and avoid glider already in the air. Pilots who have landed should clear the LZ as quickly as practicable.
7. Takeoffs and landings should be made into any significant wind.
8. When ridge soaring, reversing turns should be made away from the ridge and into the wind.
9. Gliders approaching head on should give way by moving to the right. When gliders are approaching head on and one has the ridge to the right and cannot safely give way to the right, that glider has right of way and the other should yield.
10. Pilots should avoid flying directly above or below another glider in close proximity.

12-01.05 Equipment

A. 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 hang gliders meet or exceed HGMA specifications as published for that category.
3. It is recommended that all paragliders be certified by an authorized agency or company under LTF or EN standards.
4. Mini-Wings are defined as wings specifically sold by manufacturers and described in the owner's manual for Mini-Wing. They are differentiated from paragliders by smaller size, being trimmed for a much higher speed than max LD, usually have use of a trimmer system for increasing set riser trim speed, are capable of being flown safely in higher winds than paragliders, and are meant primarily for being flown closer to the ground than paragliders and not soared. There is a type of wing with an elliptical planform which may be sold as a mini wing, but which has paraglider characteristics, called a Hybrid Wing (Mini-Paraglider). This Hybrid Wing (Mini-Paraglider) should be flown only by pilots trained in both paragliding and mini-wing flying, and may be used for soaring.

B. Other Equipment

1. It is required that pilots wear a helmet whenever they are in their harness and hooked-in or otherwise attached to their glider.
2. It is recommended that pilots wear adequate protective clothing.
3. It is recommended that pilots utilize flotation gear when there is any likelihood of landing in water.
4. It is recommended that pilots wear or utilize a reserve parachute.
5. It is recommended that pilots fly with a reliable communication device.

12-01.06 Two-Place Flights

- A. Hang glider and paraglider flights conducted under FAR 103 are restricted by federal aviation regulation to single place operations, except where they are conducted under the Tandem



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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 12-12 and its supplements.

12-01.07 Aero Towing Operations

- A. Aero towing flights in hang gliders, paragliders, or mini-wings, 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.

12-01.08 Alcohol and Drug Use

- A. Flight or instructional operations conducted in violation of the FAA CFR Part 91.17 Alcohol or Drugs, as follows:

No person may act as pilot or passenger of a hang glider or paraglider;

1. Within 8 hours after the consumption of any alcoholic beverage;
2. While under the influence of alcohol;
3. While using any drug that affects the person's faculties in any way contrary to safety; or

While having an alcohol concentration of 0.04 or greater in a blood or breath specimen. Alcohol concentration means grams of alcohol per deciliter of blood or grams of alcohol per 210 liters of breath