

LAUNCHING GLIDERS

There is a lot more to launching a glider than running with a wingtip.

Having checked the rope and weak links (see document on tow ropes), while waiting for the pilot to complete their checks you have an opportunity to notice whether there is anything amiss, for example:

- Are the brakes closed and locked?
- Is the canopy locked?
- Is the tail dolly on?
- If it is a two-seater being flown solo, is the rear canopy locked, DV panel closed, parachute out and straps secured?

Once the pilot has accepted the rope, you are responsible for the launch.

- Have a good look behind for gliders on approach or base leg
- Look ahead for gliders making an approach across the field from an abbreviated circuit or launch failure

Once you are satisfied that there are no conflicts, lift the wingtip until the wings are horizontal. This will be a different height depending on the glider, so it is important to look. If the glider is carrying water ballast, wait until the water has found its level so that the glider is balanced.

Hold the wing from behind.

Do a final check for gliders on approach.

Stand facing the way you are going to run and signal 'take up slack' – swing your arm from side to side, below shoulder level. Make large movements, maybe with a white hat in your hand – the tug pilot is looking at you in a small vibrating mirror.

When the rope goes taut, signal 'all out' – swing your arm from side to side above shoulder level - and run until the wing goes from your hand, do not hold it back.

If at any time you need to stop the launch, put the wingtip on the ground.