

ESGC Launch Marshal Operations Manual

2014

This manual is intended as a guide only. The requirement for a Launch Marshal may only exist on certain days, at the discretion of the Duty Instructor. There will be no rota, but club members of sufficient experience and confidence are encouraged to offer their services as Launch Marshal should the need arise, and to be aware at the launch point of the suggestions contained within this document, even if the appointment of a formal Launch Marshal is considered unnecessary.

Overall responsibility:

The Launch Marshal is to work in close co-operation with the Duty Instructor and other members to ensure the smooth running of all launch operations so that the maximum possible number of launches is achieved on any given day, consistent with safety, and also consistent with member satisfaction and enjoyment of our sport.

Key skills:

- The ability to remain aware of the overall operational situation at the launch point and in the circuit.
- The ability to predict emerging situations and devise strategies to avoid undesirable outcomes.
- The ability to sensitively and positively influence member actions and behaviour.
- The ability to liaise with instructors in order to streamline launch point operations.

Reporting to:

Initially the Duty Instructor of the day, and if necessary to the CFI and/or committee.

Specific duties:

1. Assisting with the set-up of the airfield (morning duty):

The Duty Instructor is primarily responsible for this, so the Launch Marshal will assist with a view to getting the field set up as quickly as reasonably possible, by allocating tasks to others or doing any other jobs necessary. Discuss with the Duty Instructor the positioning of the launch vehicle, e.g. relative to the expected grid position and length for the day. The routine aim should be to have the first glider launch at 0900, or as soon as possible thereafter.

2. Assisting with launch point operations:

- Through positive leadership, encourage all members, regardless of status, to do what is necessary for efficient and safe operational management at the launch point.
- Regularly review the flying list in conjunction with Duty Instructor and discuss the management of training requirements and scheduling of flights.
- Support club members in getting them safely airborne.
- Support visitors in making sure that other club members look after them in particular with regards to safety, but also to ensure that members engage them in general conversation in favour of gliding as a sport and ESGC as a members' club, and keep them informed as to the progress of their flying slot. Also to encourage club members to maintain a positive public demeanour at all times.
- Ensure that two lines of gliders are operated, normally with the private gliders in the south line and club gliders in the north line of the grid. However, the Launch Marshal may vary this arrangement as appropriate when desirable.
- Actively manage the glider lines such that the gliders at the front are ready to launch when or as soon as possible after cables become available. To this end, in consultation with the Duty Instructor, the launch vehicle (especially on a busy day) might be placed further

towards the back of the grid. Normally, to avoid wasted effort in repetitively moving gliders forwards by one space, a minimum of four gliders should be placed in front of the launch point.

- Ensure that pilots are made aware in good time of their launch slot approaching. Promote the culture that if a pilot when asked cannot reliably and positively confirm that they will be ready by the time a cable is available, the default action will be to launch the next glider in the grid, or move the blocking glider out of the way or to the back of the grid. However, once the decision is made to permit a pilot to take a slot and the pilot is in the glider, the Launch Marshal must assist in keeping all distractions clear of the pilot and must ensure that no time pressure is applied.
- Ensure that someone is available to unhook the cables from the tow-out vehicle as it arrives from the winch.
- Ensure that the cable tow-out vehicle is ready to drive back to the winch as soon as the first cable is airborne.
- Ensure that there is a wing-runner, log keeper and signaller ready for imminent launches.
- In the event of a launch failure to assist with co-ordination of cable retrieve operation.
- Make routine checks during the day that communications are reliable between buggies, cable tow-out vehicle, winch and launch point (i.e. radios are carried and work properly).
- Actively manage glider retrieval from the runway back to the launch point or hangar as appropriate.

3. End of day close down (afternoon duty).

The Duty Instructor is primarily responsible for this, so the Launch Marshal will assist with a view to getting the field closed down as quickly as reasonably possible, by allocating tasks to others or doing any other jobs necessary.

Notes:

1. It is acceptable and expected for the Launch Marshal to request any more senior member of the club (including instructors) to comply with reasonable and safe requests that will contribute to launch point efficiency, in the expectation that the senior member will comply in good spirit.
2. If there are issues of wilful obstruction to the Launch Marshal's function that cannot be dealt with by the Launch Marshal alone, initially the matter should be referred to the Duty Instructor, but if that is not possible, referred directly to a member of the committee.
3. No pilot is ever to be put under pressure of time, nor disturbed unless necessary, once their pre-flight checklist has begun. However, it is entirely acceptable to move pilots back in the grid before they get in the glider. The occurrence and extent of these changes will be at the Launch Marshal's discretion, though should aim to make the minimum change to the grid consistent with efficient operations and member enjoyment of our sport.
4. The committee and membership believe that the Launch Marshal's role can often be a vital one, as we attempt to improve profitability and member enjoyment. The role derives authority directly from the Duty Instructor, who will be expected to actively and publicly support the Launch Marshal's work.
5. There will be no official rota, but members are encouraged to participate by volunteering as

Launch Marshal when required, accepting appointment by the duty instructor if necessary, and at all times being aware of the issues discussed in this document as they relate in particular to operational efficiency and safety.

6. Most club members, by the time they are solo, are suitable candidates for launch marshalling duties, though a calm, assertive, but non-aggressive temperament is important as well as experience.
7. All club members are to be aware that the role of Launch Marshal is a new, additional, enabling role, and is designed to add to launch point efficiency, and in no way removes the existing responsibility from any of the functions that have been performed by members hitherto. The role works well at other clubs and all members are requested to fully support the work of the Launch Marshal whenever possible.

Launch Marshal's checklist:

- Do what is required to raise the launch rate consistent with safety and member enjoyment
- Act as a team with (and under the delegated authority of) the Duty Instructor
- Act calmly with sensitivity and diplomacy towards other members
- Ensure that visitors are properly cared for
- Operate two lines of gliders
- Ensure pilot readiness to fly
- Ensure that pilots are not put under time pressure when doing their checks
- Rearrange the grid if required but as little as possible
- Ensure that there is sufficient launch crew, and that launch-related jobs are done in good time
- Help to co-ordinate actions after a launch failure
- Actively manage landed glider retrieval from the runway

Any comments or suggestions to improve this manual would be welcome.

Andy Sanderson, April 2014