

# MGC Launch Directors Briefing 2024

Neal Clements

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# Main Point

- Main objective of a Launch Director is to:
- Ensure that the ground operation is carried out to the standard that the club demands.



And Keep the  
Landing Area Clear

# What is the club standard?

- This is comprised of:
  1. Midland Gliding Club Standard Operating Procedures Dec 2021 [SOP, under revision], *Note these include Emergency Accidents and Incidents procedure [SOP section 5 and Appendix C]*
  2. Retrieve winch operating notes issue 1
  3. Strong-Wind-Day-Briefing
  4. Additions Authorised as Per the CFI



**MIDLAND GLIDING CLUB**  
Standard Operating Procedures



Dec 2021

# MGC SOP On Launch Directors

## MGC Standard Operating procedure Pages 6 and 7

### 1.4 The Launch Director

#### 1.4.1 Qualification

Experienced pilot who has completed the MGC training syllabus.

#### 1.4.2 Responsibilities

A Launch Director assists the instructor team in ensuring and facilitating safe and efficient flying and ground operations, under the supervision of the Duty Instructor.

They may, when authorised by the Duty Instructor, initiate and supervise unpacking of the hangar.

A Launch Director should ordinarily be present on the airfield during flying operations (if launches are taking place and/or if aircraft are airborne). The Launch Director may appoint a senior and experienced pilot as a substitute for any short periods if the Launch Director is absent for any reason.

#### 1.4.3 Duties- before flying

- Check that all equipment (vehicles and retrieve winch) to be used at the Launch Point have been inspected and declared serviceable by the duty Main Winch Operator or another authorised member of the MT team
- Ensure placement of all ground equipment (control vehicle, retrieve winch, other vehicles, gliders) at the launch point is as required by the Duty Instructor.
- Ensure the following are in place at the launch point:
  1. Flying list
  2. Log sheets
  3. Cable strops with red, blue, brown, black and white weak links

### Midland Gliding Club Standard Operating Procedures

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#### 1.4.4 Duties during flying

The launch director should ensure that :

- the main and emergency landing areas and launch area are kept clear of obstructions (including sheep)
- aircraft are retrieved promptly after landing and either positioned for the next launch or parked safely
- no pre-bronze pilot flies without their flight being authorised by a member of the duty instructor team
- all glider flights are entered on the daily flying record log sheets
- report any incidents or indiscipline in the air or at the launch point to the Duty Instructor
- Suitable members are asked to carry out the tasks required for running the field
- The flying list is managed, under the supervision on the duty instructor team, by allocating single seat club aircraft to appropriately qualified/authorised solo pilots

#### 1.4.5 Duties after flying

- Organise the removal of equipment from the airfield and packing gliders into the hangar
- Ensure the daily flying log is fully written up and all gliders are accounted for
- Inform the Duty Instructor immediately if any glider is not accounted for
- Bring to the attention of the Duty Instructor any: - Safety related incidents, cross countries, badge flights etc.
- Return the Daily Flying Log to the office

And Keep the Landing Area Clear

# How to run the day

- Duties and Activities – Outline, Detail Next
  - Before Flying – *Preparation [Gliders, Everyone except instructors who are involved in the day, Equipment, Main Gate]*
    - Liaise with No.1 at start of the day, ensure we don't slip into flying without a briefing
  - During Flying – Manage ground operation
  - After Flying – Organise Clearup
- Follow the SOP
  - And Keep the Landing Area Clear

# SOP In Detail 1 / 2

## Before Flying

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- Hi Viz Jacket – if available
- Airband Handheld and ideally a Ground band Handheld – **Tested**
- Check the Retrieve Winch installation (get someone more qualified if needed)
- **DELEGATE**
  - LD is a **Responsibility not a requirement to do it ALL**
  - - *Anyone who wishes to take part in the day must expect to contribute*
- *SOP sections 4 covers Ground operations inc. 4.3.1 Retrieve Winch, 4.4 Launch Procedure*

# SOP In Detail 2 / 2

## Midland Gliding Club Standard Operating Procedures

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- And Keep the Landing Area Clear

- **Assign** key people to
  - Role - **Retrieve winch**: Competent driver? Is this a chance to train them?
  - Role - **LogBook**? Ensure is being done
  - Roles - **Launching and Recovery teams** ready, cable and gliders
- **Manage** the flying list
  - Find out what people want, Actively plan the flying slots. Launches, aircraft and instructor availability – Negotiate!
  - **Important** so that ideally everyone goes home after a Good day for them]
- **DELEGATE** – form teams if possible. —> Make sure the day flows and you have sufficient Bandwidth to cope with All

# Delegate

- Something to consider
- LD has responsibilities but cannot do all
- Will need to ask people to fill key roles
- Suggest make Teams of suitable people for
  - Launching gliders
  - Clearing the landing area of sheep and collecting landed gliders
  - Teams may be good for new people to be trained in and gives an activity with others to avoid feeling Uninvolved

# The Priorities

- **Landing**
  - **Keep the area clear of everything**
- **Launching**
  - Glider ready to go: is it safe to launch?
  - If not, hold and communicate. Main winch stop light on?
  - Launch Queue: first three gliders need to be ready to go. Launch point positive checks and release checks, CB SIFT BEC complete on the front glider before the cable arrives.
  - Is the team in Place and still functioning – Rotate A/R

# The Priorities II

- Launching
  - Instructor briefing P2 do be done, ideally, off-line, or at least completed before the glider in front launches.
- Non-glider/winch operations (MG, Gyro, power)
  - LD [or anyone] cannot give ‘clearance’, but can give information or safety warnings.
  - Learn how to use an airband radio; have a handheld available or use the one attached to the retrieve winch
  - Listen out for calls to “Long Mynd” or “Mynd Launch Point”
  - Ensure the fire/crash kit is available at the launch point

# The Priorities III

- Non-glider/winch operations (MG, Gyro, power)
  - Inform re status of winch cable: it must be on the ground and stationary (“down and dead”) before the aircraft taxis to take-off.
  - Check and give info re ‘All clear above and behind’, plus the areas that the pilot cannot see in front (vehicles/sheep/gliders in the dips in the middle of the airfield).
  - Similarly for a circuit and landing: cable must be down and dead and do not start another launch once the incoming is on base leg (powered so they could “go around” and need all the airspace above the field).
- **Landing - Keep the area clear of everything**

# Launch Directors Circular Flow Chart



# Main take away points

- Launch Directors must be:
  - Familiar with the MGC SOP – **Read It!**
  - Familiar with the Retrieve winch operating notes
  - Understand what is required for Accidents and Incidents – Be Prepared!
  - Operate the Priorities
  - Above all else DELEGATE
  - AND KEEP THE LANDING AREA CLEAR

Thank you

# MGC Website – Standard Documents

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