

# **Risk Assessments and Mitigation at Flying Sites and USHPA Chapter Events**

In order to reduce the possibility of incidents involving bodily injury to pilots, spectators and the general public due to hang gliding and/or paragliding activities engaged in by members of USHPA, the USHPA Board of Directors adopted and is implementing the following Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan is to encourage USHPA Chapters and USHPA Members that manage flying sites to identify risks of bodily injury and property damage to pilots, spectators and the general public due to hang gliding and/or paragliding activities at those flying sites, evaluate those risks, and implement, at each flying site, measures designed to minimize those risks where practical.

## **Plan Details**

### **USHPA Flying Site Recommended Operating Guidelines**

The USHPA adopts The USHPA Flying Site Recommended Operating Guidelines (attached as Appendix "A") for all of its Members and Chapters to use as a starting point for establishing sensible rules governing flight operations at each local site.

### **Program of Local Site Risk Assessments And Risk Mitigation Plans**

As a condition of Chapter affiliation with the USHPA, Chapters are required to perform an initial risk assessment of the Chapter's operations, to update that risk assessment on an annual basis, and to establish a written plan to mitigate the risks identified in that risk assessment. On an annual basis, in connection with the renewal of their Chapter affiliation, Chapters will provide a certification signed by the Chapter's designated safety officer, affirming that the Chapter has performed the required risk assessment and has adopted and implemented a written risk management plan.

### **Risk Assessments by Chapters**

The Risk Assessment should review the following Chapter operations for significant risks of significant injuries to pilots, spectators, and members of the general public:

- The Chapter's physical facilities, such as club houses, storage sheds, wind sock towers, launch ramps, towing equipment, etc...;
- Launch Sites owned, leased, permitted, managed and/or controlled by the Chapter, or over which the Chapter has any control;
- Landing Zones regularly utilized by Chapter's member pilots after launching from the Launch Site(s);

- Glider Setup and Teardown Areas regularly utilized in connection with the Launch Sites and Landing Zones;
- Parking Areas adjacent to such Launch Sites and Landing Zones;
- Roads leading to and from Launch and Landing sites;
- Events in which the Chapter or its members participate, such as chapter meetings, fly-ins, flying competitions, air shows, displays and demonstrations, lessons, clinics, training sessions, etc . . .
- USHPA will provide Chapters with a Model Risk Assessment Protocol to assist them in performing their risk assessment.
- USHPA will provide Chapters with training on performing a Risk Assessment under the Model Risk Assessment Protocol and will provide Chapters with consultation in assisting them in making their risk assessments.

### **Risk Mitigation Plans by Chapters**

The Chapter will prepare a written Risk Mitigation Plan, addressing the significant risks identified in the Chapter's Risk Assessment of that Chapter's Operations. At a minimum, the Risk Mitigation Plan should take into account the USHPA Flying Site Recommended Operating Guidelines, and apply those guidelines, as appropriate, to the Chapter's operations.

It is understood that Hang Gliding and Paragliding both involve risks that cannot be decreased or eliminated.

It is also understood that Hang Gliding and Paragliding pilots are free to make choices in their own flying as to the amount of risk those pilots are willing to assume. Nothing in this Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan is meant to take away from any pilot his or her right to choose to take whatever risks of his/her own bodily injury that such pilot deems acceptable. Each member pilot has signed the USHPA Release, Waiver and Assumption of Risk Agreement, allowing the member pilot to take such risks and relieve all others from any liability for any resulting bodily injury or property damage to the pilot.

The Risk Mitigation Plan will address mitigation of significant risks of significant injuries to pilots, spectators and the general public that are identified in the Chapter's Risk Assessment. Where mitigation is both possible and practical, the Risk Mitigation Plan will provide for mitigation of the risk.

The Chapter will appropriately communicate its Risk Mitigation Plan to its members and to those who utilize the facilities and operations managed by the Chapter.

USHPA will provide Chapters with training on the preparation of Risk Mitigation Plans.

### **USHPA Training Resources:**

USHPA will provide the following training resources to local Chapters and Event Coordinators:

- USHPA Flying Site Recommended Operating Guidelines
- Model Risk Assessment Protocol
- Example Risk Assessment(s)
- Example Risk Mitigation Plan(s)
- Series of Video Training Presentations available to Chapter's Designated Safety Officers, presented by USHPA Counsel as Attorney-Client Communications, via secured video delivery.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **USHPA Flying Site Recommended Operating Guidelines**

USHPA has determined that USHPA Members and USHPA Chapters are generally careful in their selection of flying sites, site layout, and operational practices.

The suggested guidelines detailed below have been developed to promote improved site management and provide added margins of safety for the ever-increasing numbers of gliders, structures, vehicles, and spectators. Most flying sites and pilots should be able, with reasonable effort, to comply with the suggested layout for general setup, launch and landing zones and conditions for launching, flying, and landing.

These suggested guidelines are not mandatory requirements, and compliance with these suggestions does not, of course, guarantee that no accident will occur. USHPA recommends that USHPA Chapters and Members choose and, where appropriate, design, their flying sites based not only on the geographic area available for those sites but also on obstructions, proximity of neighbors, parking areas, overhead lines, access etc., while incorporating the recommendations presented below. When choosing, and where appropriate, designing or redesigning, any flying site you are encouraged to contact USHPA with any questions, comments, or concerns regarding these guidelines, layout, and safety.

The official USHPA PILOT PROFICIENCY SYSTEM - Standard Operating Procedures - 12-2 remains the governing guideline for pilot proficiency and all USHPA Members and USHPA Chapters should conduct their flight operations in accordance with those standards.

USHPA recommends that each USHPA Member, whenever he flies, and each USHPA Chapter, in connection with the management of sites under their control, follow these guidelines in conducting flight operations. USHPA encourages each USHPA Member, whenever he flies, and each USHPA Chapter, to use, further enhance, and adapt these general recommendations, and add site specific operational guidelines to further increase spectator and pilot safety at the sites they fly and manage.

1. All participants in setup, launch, flight and landing activities should be current members of USHPA, having signed the current USHPA Release, Waiver and Assumption of Risk Agreement.
2. All participants must comply with all FAA Rules and Guidelines applicable to the setup, launch, flight and landing activities at the site.
3. All pilots must wear appropriate Safety Helmets during launch, flight, and landing.
4. All pilots should perform a harness connection check before launching.
5. Before flight operations are first conducted at a new flying site, the local FAA Branch and local general aviation operators should be notified of the operational area.

6. In the event that other exempt air space uses are present in the vicinity of the flying site (ex: Radio Controlled Aircraft, Model Rockets, Kite Flying, etc...) coordination with those other uses should be made to minimize the risk of interference or possible mid-air collisions.
7. All flight activities should be in compliance with USHPA PILOT PROFICIENCY SYSTEM - Standard Operating Procedures - 12-2.
8. Launch Areas – Launch Areas should be clear of personnel (other than current USHPA members directly involved in flight operations), structures, and vehicles 50 feet forward and 30 degrees either side of center of anticipated take off course and 30 feet rearward of starting point target. (Distance is 75 feet forward for tandem flights)
9. Designated Landing Zones and Targeted Landing Areas – Spots designated or targeted for landings should be located at a minimum of 100 feet from overhead power lines and 50 feet from ground personnel, vehicles, structures, in-use roads and spectators.
10. Clearance from Overhead Power Lines, Trees and Towers - Planned flight path should remain clear of overheard power lines, trees and towers by 75 feet. Launch points should be clear of overhead lines, trees and towers by 50 feet. Landing target spots should be clear of overhead lines, trees and towers by 100 feet.
11. No planned flight should take place within 50 feet of spectators on the ground
12. When spectators are present or at organized events in areas where weather conditions exist that increase the chance of a glider inadvertently lifting-off, tie downs or other methods of securing the aircraft should be employed for unattended gliders, in the set-up and disassembly areas.
13. Demonstration equipment at organized events should be manned and secured by authorized personnel until disassembled. Signs should be placed in front of all such equipment at events, cautioning the public not to attempt to utilize the equipment without supervision.
14. At organized events the designated Safety Director will be responsible for designating a spectator and vehicle parking area clear of gliders in a manner reasonably calculated to separate spectators and vehicles from glider operations.
15. At organized events, signs should be posted and/or personnel should be assigned at launch and landing areas to warn spectators and competitors to stay clear of launch and designated landing areas.
16. At organized events, only USHPA pilots and approved competition staff who have signed a USHPA waiver should be allowed in the designated launch area.
17. At organized events, only photographers approved by the event coordinator who have signed the USHPA waiver should be allowed in launch area or below launch area.