Gliding operations

Gliding is a popular sport with over 3000 pilots operating at a range of locations across Australia. Gliders can operate in Class E or G airspace, manoeuvre frequently to make use of rising air to climb and may be difficult to see.

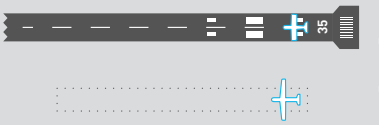
At most locations, gliders and powered aircraft will operate together. It is essential that all pilots are aware of each other's operations to improve efficiency and safety.

GLIDING OPERATIONS MAY BE NOTIFIED BY:

- ERSA entries for particular aerodromes
- Aerodrome and/or Airspace NOTAMs
- Markings on aviation charts and/or aerodrome ground signals

Aerodrome with gliding operations, including winch launch

- Avoid overflying aerodromes with gliding operations utilising winch launch. These are identified on charts by a 'W' above the gliding symbol. Winch cables can extend over 2,000 ft AGL while a launch is in progress.

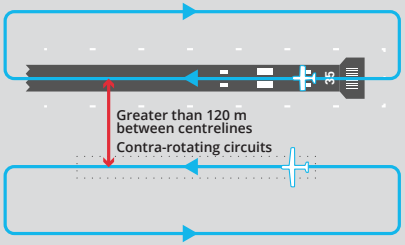


Single strip operations

- Gliders (and tugs) can operate from the normal runway or from a glider runway within the runway strip.
- Landing and take-off separation standard as for single runway.

Dual strip operations

- Gliders (and tugs) and other traffic operates to a common circuit direction from separate, closely spaced runways.
- Landing and take-off separation standard as for single runway.



Parallel runway operations

- Gliders and tugs operate to a contra-circuit pattern from other traffic, using separate parallel runways with centre-lines at least 120 m apart.
- Runway separation standards are for two independent runways.

Runway operations

- When the glider runway strip is occupied by a tug aircraft or glider, the runway is deemed to be occupied. Aircraft using the runway may, however, commence their take-off run from a position ahead of a stationary glider or tug aircraft.
- At some aerodromes a displaced threshold may be established for gliding operations. Gliders and tugs may be positioned 60 m behind the displaced threshold to enable aircraft to land at the displaced threshold.
- Where a displaced threshold is not feasible, gliders and tugs may be located more than 60 m before the threshold to enable aircraft to land.

Runway separation standards for Class G airspace are found in AIP ENR 1.1

MORE INFORMATION

Check NOTAMs or contact the gliding club (or aerodrome operator) before you arrive at an aerodrome with gliding operations.

If you operate from an aerodrome that has gliding operations, talk to the gliding club about their operations as well as your own. Working together is a great way to improve the efficiency and safety for all pilots and operators.

KEY POINTS

- Gliders can be launched using a variety of methods including aero tow, vehicle tow, self-propulsion and winch launch. In all cases, vehicles and people may be operating on, or in the vicinity of, the runways in use.
- Pilots should provide greater separation to gliders under tow, or thermalling.
- Glider circuits are typically closer to the runway than those of powered aircraft.
- Tug aircraft circuits are typically between those of a glider and other powered aircraft.
- Gliders are not permitted to thermal below 1,500 ft AGL on the live side of the circuit area **unless** they monitor the CTAF and give way to and maintain adequate separation from other traffic in the circuit area.
- Gliders may need to fly modified or contrary circuits for operational reasons.
- Gliders landing have priority over powered aircraft. Similarly, for collision avoidance, when two aircraft are on converging headings at approximately the same height, powered aircraft give way to gliders.
- A glider being towed by a vehicle (other than for a launch) is considered to be a taxiing aircraft.
- If winch launching is used, over-flying the runway below 2,000 ft AGL, or landing without confirming that the cable is clear of the approach path and runway is not advised.
- Gliders and support personnel may be on a range of different frequencies depending on the type of glider, airspace and operation. Usual frequencies are area VHF, CTAF, or one of the gliding frequencies 122.5, 122.7 or 122.9 MHz. A glider may also be non-radio equipped.

More information on gliding operations is available at AIP ENR 5.5