



BHPA/BMFA Operating Code: Co-existing with model aircraft

The British Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association and the British Model Flying Association have discussed together the shared use of sites by hang gliders/paragliders and radio controlled slope soaring model gliders.

The two bodies have concluded that there is at present no reason to call for a general segregation of these two branches of sporting aviation. Both bodies believe that the two activities can and should be able to co-exist safely and harmoniously on shared sites, even when circumstances dictate the use of shared airspace.

However, safety and harmony do require the followers of both activities to adopt positive attitudes and to follow certain basic rules of conduct. The purpose of this Joint Code is to give guidance to enable hang gliding and model flying enthusiasts to arrive at safe and sensible detailed local rules for specific shared sites.

For both parties:

- a) Club officials (or group leaders/representatives) should make positive attempts to meet their opposite numbers with a view to establishing joint rules of conduct for specific local sites. These officials/leaders/representatives should make every effort to head off and/or minimise the adverse effect of "Hot-Heads" of either side. A club official should be nominated as liaison officer for future contracts.
- b) Where and when segregated airspace is practicable without undue penalty on either activity then it should be implemented.
- c) Where, as is likely to be more normal, shared airspace is necessary to one degree or another, then separate hang gliding/paragliding and model landing area shall be clearly designated. Similarly separate hang gliding/paragliding and model launching areas shall be clearly designated.
- d) "Parking" areas for models and hang gliders/paragliders shall be clearly designated and sited so as to minimise the problems presented by either activity, e.g. landing approaches over model or hang glider/paraglider parking areas should be avoided by both sides. Footpaths must not be obstructed.
- e) When rules have been agreed they should be promulgated locally and if possible carried on suitable notice boards at the sites.
- f) On any particular day, if several models and hang gliders/paragliders are present one representative on each side should be nominated as "Duty Liaison Officer" to ensure that agreed rules are kept to and that any ad hoc problems are dealt with promptly.

Rules for hang glider/paraglider pilots (a copy of the rules for model flyers is available from BHPA office).

- 1) Before attempting to fly, check what the local site rules are for the day. Familiarise yourself with the model launch, landing and parking areas. If you are the first hang glider pilot to arrive make yourself known to the model flyers and tell them where your landing and parking areas are going to be.
- 2) If you are an inexperienced hang glider pilot do not fly in airspace likely to be shared with model gliders.
- 3) Do not take off until your take off area is clear of model gliders.
- 4) Avoid flying directly between a model and its operator.
- 5) Avoid flying in the critical airspace associated with the designated model launch, land and parking areas.

- 6) Remember that although the models are more agile than you their operators are separated from the models by some distance. This often results in poor depth of perception by the operator. In addition, distractions can cause the operator to become disoriented with respect to his model - perhaps leading directly to incorrect directional controls.
- 7) Never use 27MHz AM walkie talkies. Apart from being illegal in the UK they are in precisely the same band as the legal model control frequencies - thus interference will be inevitable, leading to uncontrolled and potentially dangerous flight paths.
- 8) Remember that model flyers have been operating many more years than hang gliders/paragliders - they have just as much right as you to be in the air. They are also represented on the same national and international bodies as the BHPA.