

SAFETY BULLETIN 13

DECEMBER 2020



Offset Hooks and Cables

You may recall that one of the topics of this year's safety briefs was the danger of offset cables. If only we all remembered the theory.

On Sunday, we launched from the Clubhouse and, owing to the wet airfield, the cables were sensibly towed along the track. This creates an marked offset in the first instance.

To enable a flattish take-off run without being winched into rising ground on the north side of the launch point in the low winds, the gliders were positioned to the south. This exaggerated the offset of the cable still further. The south cable offset was bad enough, the north cable had a 3m larger offset. Already we can see the holes in the safety Swiss cheese lining up, can't we?

While some launches had the bow in the cable largely pulled out before being attached to the glider, this particular launch – using the north cable – did not (This action can greatly reduce the hazard by straightening as much as possible the part of the cable closest to the glider). More holes in the cheese lining up?

The glider to which the cable was attached happened to be the Junior, which is the glider in the fleet with the most offset hook. Therefore, we magnified every opportunity to create a dangerous situation. When the all out was called, the glider obeyed the laws of physics and indeed lurched clockwise but was in this instance held by full rudder. However, it was an ugly moment.

Please let's learn from it. All of us from the one who pulled the cable to the one who connected it. The one who waved the launch off to the one on comms and not forgetting the pilot whose neck is on the line. That's five links in the causal chain – and I was one of them.

The message has been around long enough in the Club, please pull out those bows in the cable to create as straight a launch cable as possible. If you can't shake out the bow in the cable, get someone to show you how.

Any questions on this subject, as ever, speak to me, the CFI or a committee member.

David Close

Club Safety Officer 7 December 2020