

Standard Operating Procedure

Aerotow Launch Control



Purpose: Controlling an aerotow launch using radio

Who: Aerotow launch marshal

General: Refer also to revised guidance to be published in *Managing Flying Risk* by BGA in July 2020.

- The tug will be positioned in its normal take off position with the glider aligned along the strip behind it.
- If the tug's engine is off, the pilot has no comms. (The tug will not have the radio switched on until a short time after engine start.) The launch marshal should make himself visible to the tug pilot to signal that a launch is imminent. The signal is moving an arm in a circular motion at waist level. This should give the tug pilot time to complete the pre-flight checks, including switching on the radio, before the glider pilot wishes to launch.
- When the glider is ready, its pilot will ask for the rope to be put on.
- The runner will hold the glider wingtip to maintain its wings parallel to the ground. He/she will tell the glider pilot if there is adverse up/down loading. The glider pilot is to correct with appropriate aileron so that the load on the runner is neutral (i.e. no force either up or down). Note: an experienced pilot is desirable as a runner for low/long wing gliders. Less experienced wing runners must be well briefed on these types. (Reasonably fit wing runner needed due to the longer aerotow ground run.)
- The ring of the rope assembly will be inserted into the appropriate aerotow hook (after checking with the glider pilot in case of uncertainty).
- The aerotow launch marshal will position him/herself alongside the glider and check all clear above and behind.
- Once satisfied it is safe to launch, the launch controller will contact the tow aircraft to initiate the launch:
 - *G-KWAK, Halesland launch point, take up slack.*
 - Followed when appropriate by:
 - *G-AK, All out.*
- In the case of an unsafe occurrence whilst either aircraft is still on the ground or ground run, the instruction STOP is to be called, thus:
 - *AK, STOP.*
- Note that on receipt of the STOP call the tug pilot will make a decision as to appropriate action, which may be for him to continue the take off. Once the tug is airborne, no STOP order is to be issued as control is with the pilots.