

## SAFETY ON THE AIRFIELD

**Aim:** To learn how to ensure you are safe when at an airfield.

The airfield is a wide open place and to the unfamiliar can pose a risk if potential hazards are not appreciated and allowed for. Other activities also happen on the field like power flying, motor gliders, model aircraft, and microlights so it can be a very busy place. Because it is an airfield, an aircraft in difficulty may land unannounced. There may be more than one launch method in use so cables may be laid out over the seemingly open field. Gliders usually launch into wind like most other aircraft but when it comes to landing, they can approach from a variety of directions and land in places all over the airfield. They are quiet and can be difficult to see so all this adds up to making the airfield a place for all to have a high awareness of safety. The following are some general safety considerations for the airfield:

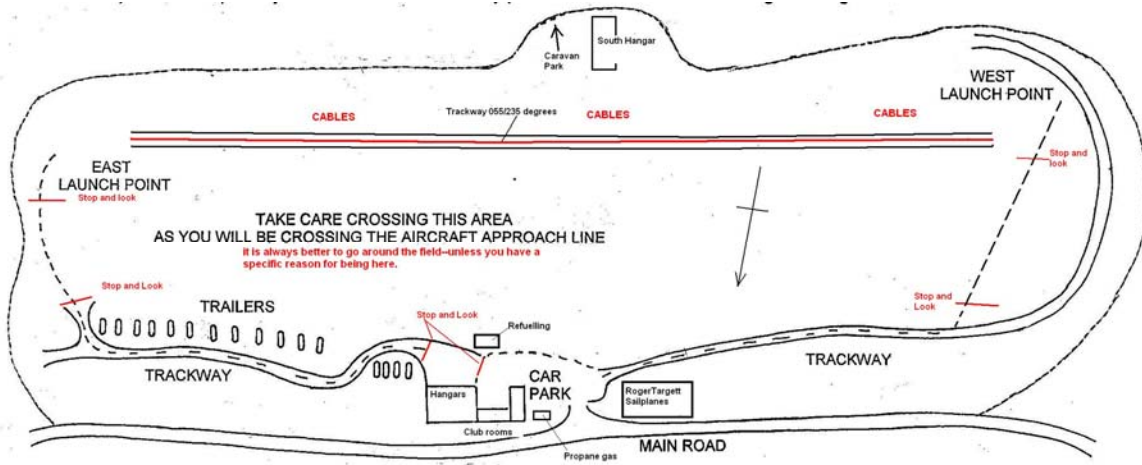
- Check where cars are permitted to drive on / around the field. Access is usually around the perimeter of the field and the location of the launch bus will normally indicate the base of gliding operations to head for.
- Avoid damaging the airfield surface when driving; particularly in winter when the ground can be soft.
- Drive in a predictable manner and at a reasonable speed. (10mph)
- If driving out on to the field, check the way is clear of launching or approaching aircraft.
- Stop if an aircraft is on approach so they can manoeuvre around you if necessary.
- Park cars in designated areas clear of aircraft manoeuvring / parking areas.
- Keep a good lookout when venturing out onto the airfield operating area as landing gliders will not be heard and can approach from any direction. Remember, the glider cannot put on power to overshoot to avoid you.
- Tow planes trail ropes with small steel rings on the end that are potentially lethal so keep well clear of their approach path.
- Cross landing areas only when necessary and avoid loitering in such areas.
- Never cross the takeoff path of an aircraft even if it doesn't look ready for launch. The safe path is around behind the aircraft.
- Avoid getting close to or crossing a launch cable or the area where they may be. Treat all cables as "live" as they can be operated without warning even without a glider attached.
- Do not handle launch cables / ropes or their attachment rings unnecessarily.
- Never walk or stand in front of a glider which has a launch cable / rope attached.
- Remain well clear of the winch when it is operating as cables or parts of cables and launch apparatus can land all round the vicinity. (The winch driver has a protective cage for his safety)
- Do not approach an aircraft with a propeller turning unless the pilot is aware of your intentions and has signalled so. Learn the safe way to approach the pilot; usually from behind the wing or along the leading edge so as to be clear of the prop.
- Smoking is not permitted near aircraft, in any vehicle or building, near gliders or refuelling operations.
- Ensure any children with you are aware of where they can safely play on the airfield.
- Dogs must be kept on a leash, or under control.
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Most of the points are common sense and come naturally once you are familiar with gliding operations. Be alert for others who are not so familiar and alert them to any hazards before they endanger themselves or others. Be polite and they will appreciate your actions. Stay alert and be prepared to ask if you are unsure about any aspect of the operation.

*It doesn't hurt to ask.... It can hurt if you don't.*

### Need To Know:

- The rules and considerations for driving on an airfield.
- Personal safety considerations when we are out on the airfield.



**Further reading :** Club Rules; and notice boards.  
Chapter 2, The Glider Pilot's Manual; by Ken Stewart. Good all round info on Gliding Sites.