

Gliding

The sport of gliding of course takes place outdoors. With care and within limits, gliding can be compatible with social distancing and other COVID19 mitigating requirements.

The Government has announced that dual and instructional flying may take place in England from the 4th of July. This BGA Phase 2 guidance supports solo and dual/instructional flying, including by those from different households.

It must be noted that Government public health requirements and implementation dates may differ between England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. BGA will endeavour to identify any relevant differences. Meanwhile, the following guidance is relevant everywhere.

COVID19 considerations

- Glider pilots are for the most part in good health (being fit for flight puts a person at the higher than average of the medical fitness spectrum) **but** some are in a risk category (eg. age, associated medical issues, etc.)
- The infection status of members at the same site will certainly not be identical, or even known. In addition, remember that someone with the disease can infect others even before showing any signs of the disease.
- **The importance of avoiding a further wave of infections**

COVID19 mitigation

The following BGA guidance which supports a compliant and risk managed approach is based on published official guidance, and all must be alert to any forthcoming new or revised information which may call for new or different actions. **Items 1 – 4 are the personal responsibility of each member.** Members should also keep each other honest in the interest of the wider community.

1. Members who are vulnerable or extremely vulnerable (if in doubt, please seek advice from a GP) should follow the [relevant guidance](#). This may mean that they cannot visit a gliding club.
2. Members who [have COVID19 symptoms must stay at home and follow NHS guidance](#)
3. Members who:
 - have been diagnosed with COVID19 at any time during the past 14 days, or
 - have had symptoms of COVID19 at any time in past 8 days, or
 - have been in close contact with someone who has COVID19 (less than 1m for more than 15 mins or direct physical contact) in the past 14 days, or
 - are required to be quarantinedmust stay away from the club and follow the current NHS guidance.
4. Mitigating actions are necessary to reduce the risk of transmission between members, who must comply with social distancing requirements. Ideally, people should maintain 2m distance from each other. Where that is not possible and is permitted under national public health guidance (as it is in England from 4th July) they should maintain 1m distance with a nose and mouth covering (known as a face covering).
5. Members may be feeling anxious about visiting the site whilst at the same time having a sense of duty. It should be made clear to all members that there is no obligation of attendance or participation.
6. Potential mitigating actions by clubs are set out in these examples:
 - Signage reminding members to maintain social distancing.
 - Signage to remind members to frequently wash their hands for 20 seconds.

- Providing easy access to hand washing facilities, open or pedal operated bins, and toilet facilities.
- Providing disposable gloves where required, eg for using shared equipment.
- Establishing arrangements for frequent cleaning of equipment and surfaces that are touched regularly, using standard cleaning products (see note below regarding aircraft cockpit cleaning).
- Specific instruction for use of clubhouse and briefing facilities. For example, distancing and cleaning.
- Provide easily understood and practical guidance on how to limit exposure when operating two-seat gliders, eg;
 - reasonably minimise the number of student pilots each instructor flies with
 - minimise the flight time to that reasonably required to complete the flight aims
 - cockpit cleaning pre and post flight (see guidance below)
 - optional use of face coverings and gloves
 - avoid close (less than 2m, or 1m with face coverings) face to face dialogue during ground briefings
 - use face coverings in flight, but only if it is safe and practical to do so.
 - avoid the need for close assistance when strapping in and exiting the cockpit
- At the end of the flying day cleaning:
 - the aircraft particularly on pushing and lifting points and the cockpit.
 - the airfield vehicles, winch, tug, tow-vehicles, parachutes ([see BGA published guidance](#)), portable radios (careful – use wipes), etc.
 - any shared facilities, eg washrooms.
- Having finished at the site, everyone should wash their hands for 20 seconds before departing

Perhaps most importantly, everyone must do what they reasonably can to not only avoid becoming infected but also to avoid infecting others.

Aircraft cockpit cleaning

In addition to regular cleaning of wing tips and other touched surfaces, prior to another pilot occupying the cockpit it needs to be cleaned using an antiseptic wipe or solution that cannot damage the aircraft materials. Particular attention should be paid to:

- Canopy opening handles, the control handles and stick, the instrument panel buttons and knobs
- Microphone gooseneck, microphone head and grille. It may be helpful to install a food-type clingfilm on the head of the microphone that should be replaced each time the pilot changes.
- Seat harness buckles and pull-down straps.

To minimise the amount of cleaning required during the day, it will be helpful to limit the sharing of aircraft equipment, such as parachutes. Where the equipment is to be used by another person, it should be cleaned as described above ([see BGA published guidance re cleaning parachute harnesses](#)). Headsets should ideally be personally owned and used. If not, they should be cleaned as described above.

Face masks/coverings ([see Govt guidance on making face coverings](#)).

When masks or face coverings are being worn:

- **In all cases, masks (or any other protective equipment) must not interfere with the operation of the aircraft.**
- Pilots need to consider the likelihood of spectacles or sunglasses steaming up.
- Pilots flying solo should consider removing their mask after closing the canopy and refit the mask after flight ahead of opening the canopy.
- Pilots flying two seat aircraft should keep their masks in place **but only if it is safe to do so.**
- Two-seat flying will require a pre-launch communication check between both pilots.
- Consider that in general people may not be heard as clearly as they otherwise would be.

Summary of mitigations

Before going to the club	Members who are vulnerable or extremely vulnerable or have: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• been diagnosed with COVID19 at any time during the past 14 days, or• had symptoms of COVID19 at any time in past 8 days, or• been in close contact with someone who has COVID19 (less than 1m for more than 15 mins or direct physical contact) in the past 14 days,• or are required to be quarantined must stay away from the club and follow the current NHS guidance.
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ideally, people should maintain 2m distance from each other. Where that is not possible and is permitted under national public health guidance (as it is in England from 4th July) they should maintain 1m distance with a nose and mouth covering (known as a face covering).• Regularly clean shared equipment and hands.
Dual/instructional flying (where permitted by national public health guidance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimise numbers of students per instructor• Maintain social distancing during briefings• Minimise the time spent airborne to that required to complete the training• Use face coverings, if it is practical and safe to do so.¹

Currency

[BGA guidance linked here will be helpful to CFIs and others making decisions about flying including instruction.](#)

Encouraging all pilots to adopt a low risk approach to restarting flying is important. Examples include;

- Re-establishing currency on a familiar launch type and in a familiar aircraft type
- Re-establishing currency before undertaking a cross-country
- Practicing a turbo start near the home airfield
- Thinking through the practical considerations of an away landing:
 - other airfields and strips may be closed or not allow relaunch
 - road retrieve arrangements, unless provided by members of the pilot's household, conflict with social distancing
 - potential to compromise local residents' and landowners' social distancing needs, with potential for reputational impact to gliding.

Instruction

When returning to instructional flying, pilots, instructors and students will be out of practice. In respect of instruction, the BGA guidance notes describe how CFI's should;

- Insist (instructors) read '[Managing Flying Risk](#)'.
- Refer to BGA instructor requirements, which include a significant exemption regarding revalidation/renewal. Encourage instructors to fly solo initially to refresh handling skills.
- Be confident of an instructor's currency before allowing them to fly with a student or passenger.
- Remind instructors of the late take over control directions, ie *take over IMMEDIATELY, even if you are a very experienced instructor, if P2 makes a potentially dangerous error.*

First Flights (ie introductory flights/trial lessons)

Most clubs will want to prioritise flying for their existing members. Before committing to first flights, clubs should very carefully consider the implications. First flights operate within a managed environment that full members of the club generally understand and are compliant with. New, temporary members are briefed but cannot be reasonably expected to immediately fully understand the environment and therefore are closely supervised and assisted.

Mitigating for COVID19 clearly adds additional supervisory and assistance challenges. In addition to ensuring they are

¹ DfT, in permitting dual/instructional flying, impose no specific conditions. However, in keeping with the general obligation to maintain social distancing where possible, any safe and reasonable mitigations (e.g. face coverings) should be considered.

current, pilots carrying out first flights should re-read the specific guidance in '[Managing Flying Risk](#)'.

Additional considerations ahead of restarting dual and instructional flying

Equipment

Many two-seat aircraft have been unused for an extended period. Is there a plan and activity to ensure they are fit for purpose? Are there any aircraft maintenance issues or ARC renewals that need to be addressed? Has a club COVID19 mitigation resulted in modified cockpit equipment, and if so, is it airworthy, ie safe and compliant, and is the insurer aware?

Pilot licences

Those who are required to be licenced to fly will need to check the relevant rating validity is either in date, or in the case of rolling recency, the required number of hours and launches etc have been flown. [The CAA has issued exemptions which extend validity periods or extend the rolling recency period.](#)

Good neighbours

Any housing near an airfield will have experienced a very quiet period with little flying taking place. A gliding operation that suddenly bursts into life with training activity will become obvious. Advising neighbours of an increase in activity and reminding club pilots about established noise avoidance mitigation may be necessary depending on local circumstances.

Other information

EASA has issued COVID19 guidance for GA flying including this health status checklist. If any of the statements are true, the person should not fly and should be advised to stay away from a gliding club:

Health Status Checklist

GA crew members, passengers or other participants should make the following Health Status Check prior to every flight.

If any of these statements apply to you, you should not fly!

I have been diagnosed with COVID-19 at any time during the 14 days prior to my flight

I have had COVID-19 symptoms (fever, newly developed cough, loss of taste or smell, shortness of breath) at any time during the 8 days prior to my flight

I have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 (face-to-face contact within 1 meter for more than 15 minutes or direct physical contact) in the 14 days prior to my flight

I am required by local or national regulations to be in quarantine for reasons related to COVID-19 for a period that includes the date of the flight

The BGA publishes supporting guidance for clubs and members, including this document, on its members website at <https://members.gliding.co.uk/covid19-restrictions-support-exemptions-and-restarting-gliding-information/>

BGA
30th June 2020