



EGU Newsletter

Safety Special



May 2023

Editor: Robert Danewid robert.danewid@gmail.com

Editors note

On the EGU website <http://www.glidingunion.eu> you find a lot of useful information. If you have forgotten the password to the internal section, please contact EGU.

Introduction by the President

Arild Solbakken



We are taking the rather unusual step of issuing a special EGU Newsletter dedicated to just one topic – safety. We are doing this because we have heard several reports from many Member States on the issue of rigging errors. Frequently these appear to be due to minor lapses of concentration or small errors, but the results are too frequently fatal. We cannot solve this problem simply by distributing this newsletter but, by increasing awareness among all our members of the external threats and individual errors associated with rigging, we hope we can go some way to reducing these avoidable accidents.

Please distribute this newsletter as widely as you possible can and also read and reflect on the advice and guidance provided or equivalent advice and guidance from your national authorities. We owe it to our friends, our families and ourselves to minimize these errors and senseless loss of life.

Safe Rigging

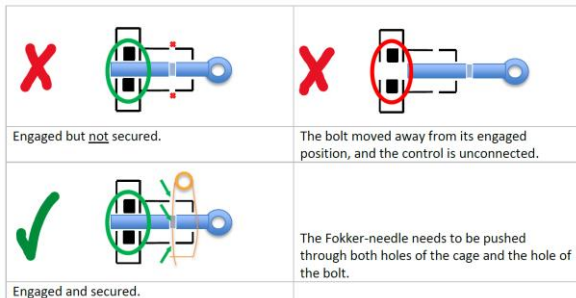
Ted Richards, TO/WS Flight Safety



Few glider pilots have the luxury of keeping their gliders rigged from day to day and all gliders have some element of rigging that is not fully automatic and self-checking. Even glider that advertise they have automatic rigging almost always have some element that is not fully automated and self-correcting. Hence, for many gliders, each flying day starts off with a risk that the rigging will have been carried out incorrectly. That risk is hard to quantify but, since the consequences are often fatal, it is our collective responsibility to do everything we can to reduce the probability of incorrect rigging.

In 2019 this issue was the subject of a Safety Information Bulletin (SIB) published by EASA ([EASA SIB 2019/07](#)). EASA recommended that gliding communities use the SIB to develop training material and sessions on rigging procedures and typical mistakes observed. They noted that the material and training should provide a basic understanding of the design of standard connections and their proper operation and that local gliding clubs should provide rigging

training tailored to the respective fleet in operation.



Principle of engage and secure

In addition to referencing several relevant accident reports from various countries, the SIB also referred to another SIB dating from 2011 ([SIB 2011-11](#)) entitled “A reliable approach to rigging a sailplane”. Going even further back, it also referenced a German Airworthiness Directive ([LTA-1993-001/3](#) in German and English) on the subject of l’Hotellier ball and socket connectors.

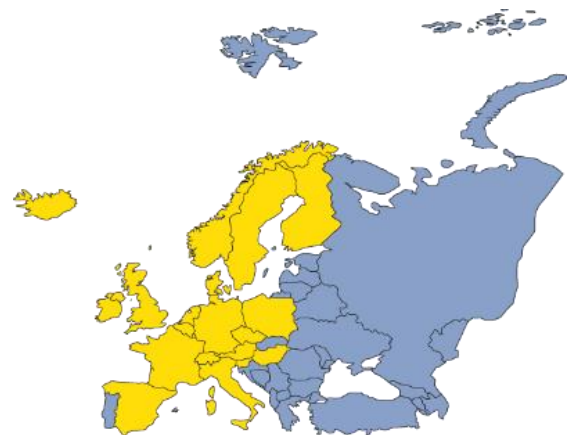
This history of rigging errors can be traced back on-line over 30 years and was probably evident almost from the beginnings of our sport. Yet this entirely avoidable risk continues to cause accidents and deaths. In a 2015 publication entitled “[Is Your Glider Fit for Flight](#)”, the British Gliding Association noted: “Rigging accidents are rare but, in the course of about a million riggings over the last 44 years, there have been 138 instances of an insecure or unconnected wing, tail or flying control. These led to 11 fatalities and 8 serious injuries.” It also notes “Nearly one in ten of the UK fleet of ASW19/20/Pegase and PIK 20B/D gliders had launched with an unconnected elevator. There have been two fatalities and three serious injuries”

Advice and guidance by the British Gliding Association on how to avoid rigging issues has recently been significantly expanded and updated. It is part of their overall guidance on [Managing Flying Risk – Preparation for Flight](#) and has a specific section devoted to [Safe Rigging](#). It emphasizes that people who are rigging gliders need to know the subject, avoid errors, and prove the glider is fit to fly. Under each of those heading, there are several considerations most of which are relevant to all circumstance and all gliders. This leaflet can be machine translated into the language of your choice via [this link](#) and selecting your desired language (see snip below).

It is highly likely however that similar advice is available within your own country and language. At risk of summarizing a very complex topic, four factors would appear to be critical:

- Know all aspects of how to rig your glider
- Do not be subjected to distractions or time pressures when rigging or preparing for flight
- Best practice requires an independent check and signature for all elements of the rig
- Beyond doing a positive control check as part of the DI, which should also confirm that main and drag pins are properly fitted and secured, walk round the glider before you fly and make sure movements of all control surfaces are reflected in the cockpit. We welcome any details you can provide on this topic and we are looking to ways in which we can share this information in a more readily accessible manner. We are also looking to work with EASA and IGC/OSTIV to put this work on a more formal footing.

On behalf of the European gliding community, we implore you all, individually and collectively, to read the advice that is provided and to do everything possible to minimize or eliminate rigging errors.



EGU members (yellow)