BIOSECURITY, SITE MANAGEMENT& LANDOWNER INFORMATION

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CONTENTS

1 Introduction

This document should be read in conjunction with the Operations Manual, and *SAFA Policy on Site Management*.

The Australian National Site Guide is another available resource for the inventory of the sports site assets and provision of sites information to users.
http://siteguide.org.au/index.html\

2 Purpose

This document is a resource to provide;

- Pilot education for Biosecurity risk reduction;
- Guidance, ideas and suggestions for the purposes of assisting Site Administrators with management advice such as administration, establishment, assessment, retention, rating, and sustainment; and,
- Information for landowners.

3 Biosecurity

3.1 What is it?

Biosecurity describes the **systems put in place to protect a farm or park from diseases**. These systems reduce the risk of damaging diseases, pests, weeds or other contaminants entering, can prevent health issues emerging, and can reduce impacts of disease if it occurs.

3.2 Legislation

The Department of Agriculture administers the *Biosecurity Act 2015,* in order to protect Australia's animal, plant and human health status and to maintain market access for Australian food and other agricultural exports. Biosecurity is a critical part of the government's efforts to prevent, respond to and recover from pests and diseases that threaten the economy and environment.

3.3 Be Aware

People can carry diseases, pests, weeds and contaminants onto property or parks without even realising. They can be ***carried on vehicles, clothing, equipment or pets***. Pilots should seek to avoid inadvertent transmission of flora or fauna diseases or spread of pests and weeds.

Pilots should be aware of properties in the regular areas they operate that may have applicable Biosecurity plans in place.

3.4 Minimise Risk

Whether a Biosecurity Plan is in place or not;

- ✓ ***Vehicles*** – don't drive on rural properties without permission, stay on marked roads/tracks in parks. Clean tyres of soil/dirt accumulated from other areas.
- ✓ ***Clothing*** - ensure clothing (particularly shoes/socks) are free of seeds, grasses or other contaminants.
- ✓ ***Equipment*** – ensure equipment is free of seeds, grasses or other contaminants.
- ✓ ***Pets*** – leave them at home, ***do not take them on rural properties***. Pets are prohibited from state or national parks in almost all cases.

3.5 Biosecurity Management Plans

If a Biosecurity Management Plan applies to a property, the property will be signposted at entrances and may be signposted on adjacent roadways.

Pilots must not enter signposted properties. Penalties for failure to comply with the *Biosecurity Act 2015* can include an on the spot fine of $1000 or a court ordered fine of $220,000 for individuals

4 Site Management

SAFA does not directly administer, manage, or maintain flying sites. Regional Associations (RA) and/or affiliated clubs in the Region, are delegated Site Administrator responsibilities for administration and management of flying sites.

SAFA encourages Regional Associations & Clubs to embrace site policies that build a sustainable future for our aviation community. In some areas for various reasons, it may be a requirement to become a member of the local Regional Association and/or administering club prior to using a site. Pilots should check the national site guide and local club websites for more information.

Site administration and management responsibility, is usually recognised as the most regionally appropriate club, or the club which may have established a new site. Dispute shall be mediated by the RA and/or SAFA to ensure the most appropriate membership access and benefit.

4.1 Guidelines for Site Establishment & Retention

4.1.1 Establishment considerations

Regions, clubs or individuals wishing to establish a new flying site may use the following guidelines. Consider the feasibility and desirability of the proposed site with regard to:

- airspace restrictions
- orientation to prevailing winds
- hazards that may compromise safety
- suitable landing areas that are easily attainable from the launch and accessible by motor vehicle
- launch and assembly areas that are suitable and easily cleared and maintained ease of access
- environmental conditions, snow, rainfall, heat

4.1.1.1 Access & Ownership

Initially the owner, lessee or governing body of the launch site and landing areas should be ascertained.

If access to the site or landing areas is through other properties or by private road, the owner/s of this land must also be ascertained.

The local council holds records of property ownership, which are accessible on request. The local Dept. of Lands or equivalent will have records of public land ownership, (Crown, Forestry, National Parks, etc.)

Care must be taken that the actual landowner is found and not just a tenant who could give a false impression of the owners stance in regard to the land use. The appropriate land owners must then be approached with regard to use, entry and clearing if required. Landowners and others do not

necessarily understand or appreciate our sports, the 'Land Owner Information' section of this document may be printed or used to assist informing those not familiar with the sports.

A landowner may request a lease be taken on the land. This will be costly, has many legal implications and could necessitate the imposition of a fee to fly the site. A lease does not necessarily guarantee ongoing use of a site.

4.1.1.2 Government

When dealing with Government Departments it is always preferable to first approach the relevant personnel in person rather than in writing. This can then lead to the correct application procedure.

Often a written request is shelved for interminable periods of time and can lead to excessive red tape to be negotiated. Any inside contacts in a department involved can prove invaluable. The vast majority of public servants are conducive to hang gliding operations and most reasonable requests are granted.

Some councils have tree preservation regulations and may have to be approached as well as land owners when tree clearing.

4.1.1.3 Airspace

Where a site is in controlled airspace or an area of high air traffic density it is necessary to make application to the regional branch of CASA for clearances. These applications usually require payment of a fee.

4.1.1.4 Insurances

Often a landowner will require a copy of the SAFA Third Party Insurance Certificate of Currency. A waiver signed by all site users may also be requested. The SAFA waiver has been built for this purpose and is available for download from the website. Where funds to develop a site are required, these are usually available from the relevant RA.

4.1.1.5 Site Administrator/Site Manager

The SAFA as a body does not directly control any site nor does it usually provide any direct funding to sites. While there is always an interest in developing and maintaining access to all sites, the control, development and procurement of sites is largely left at Regional or club local level. Where site administration or management is disputed by two parties, the Regional Association in which the site is located, and/or the Operations manager will mediate to determine oversight recognition.

4.1.1.6 Site Establishment

Having obtained permission to proceed with clearing and secured approval for funding, work can begin. Where possible, voluntary working bees should be organised. Where large trees need to be felled it is advisable to hire a competent timber cutter, preferably a local forestry employee.

4.1.1.7 Launch Ramps

If a launching ramp is required, this should be included in the funding application and should provide the method and nature of its construction. Climactic and constructional requirements should be considered where selecting materials. The amount of use of a site may be a factor when ramp costs are being considered.

4.1.1.8 Signs

Visiting pilots may use a site and fail to contact a local pilot for protocols and a site briefing. Where this is probable, a sign should be provided to alert visiting pilots of local procedures, site rating and hazards. Approval for installation of signs should be obtained from the landowner.

Often government departments will have guidelines for the size/colour/location etc. This sign should be of durable construction and erected in a conspicuous position.

4.1.1.9 Maintenance

Once established, a site is maintained by the recognised site administrator.

4.1.2 Site Appraisal and Rating

Rating a site for minimum experience level; HG Supervised, Intermediate, Advanced or PG1, PG2, PG3, PG4 or PG5, is conducted by the sites administering club or body.

When a new site is opened, classification is decided by a joint agreement of the local club safety personnel, executives, and may include input from the Regional Association and the Operations Manager.

Club Safety Officer meetings should be held to ensure that all club safety officers are aware of the rating applicable to each club site and what conditions are appropriate to allow safe operations at each site. These meetings should also discuss the specific briefing requirements for visiting pilots, local or Restricted Certificate holders, such as hazards, areas to be avoided, landing options, possible changes in wind conditions, etc. Site information & hazards should be added to the club, or National Site Guide.

The rating applicable to most sites can vary greatly with changes in conditions. It may be appropriate to have a scale of different ratings dependent on conditions, though some sites (such as a site with a cliff launch or without any bottom landing) would need to remain an advanced rated site for any conditions.

Site rating details should be entered on the Australian National Site Guide.

4.1.3 Site Appraisal Checklist

The following site classification appraisal checklist has been prepared to assist site classification.

See also forms ***Site Appraisal Checklist*** **(FAC-02)**, and ***Site Appraisal and Registration*** **(FAC-09)**, as required by Training facilities.

Each question should be considered and negatives taken into account when setting a rating level for a site.

Launch Considerations

Wind flow:

- Will turbulence be a problem?
- Will the launch accept a crosswind?
- Will a crosswind create turbulence?

Launch run area:

- Is the slope appropriate, smooth and free of hazards?
- Is a ramp or earthworks required?

Is clearance from hazards sufficient on either side and in front?
Is there sufficient area for paragliders to safely abort a launch?

Hazards:

Is the area in front of launch free of obstacles?
If a slot in trees, is tree clearing adequate?
Are powerlines in the vicinity?
Can any other existing hazards (such as large rocks, etc.) be removed?

Lift/Soaring Zone Considerations

Wind flow:

Will turbulence be a problem?
Will the site accept a crosswind?
Will a crosswind create excessive turbulence?

Hazards:

Are power lines present, if so are they visible, should markers be attached?
Is terrain likely to induce turbulence?
Are there other hazards present (i.e. large rock outcrops, trees, buildings, etc.)

Landing Considerations

Location:

Is the landing easily attainable?
Are there alternate emergency landing areas?
Is landing visible from launch?

Wind flow:

Will turbulence be a problem?
Will the landing area accept a crosswind?
Will a crosswind create turbulence?

Suitability:

Is there adequate landing space available?
Is the slope acceptable?
Is approach clear of hazards?
Is landing area clear of hazards?

General

Size:

Will overcrowding be a problem?

Orientation:

Does site face prevailing winds?
If a thermal site, is site conducive to thermal activity and/or cross-country flying?

Access:

Is suitable access available to launch and landing? Is site conveniently located?

Safety:

What accident contingency plans are required?
Is a documented Risk Assessment required?

4.1.4 Suitability for Training

See also forms ***Site Appraisal Checklist*** **(FAC-02)**, and ***Site Appraisal and Registration*** **(FAC-09)**.

Classifying a site as suitable for training has enormous potential liabilities if an accident involving an inexperienced student pilot should occur. The liabilities increase if the student is undergoing paid instruction. Student supervision and site use suitability lies with the instructor on site during the training. Some sites, however, may determine that the club or RA managing the site restrict access for training purposes. Restrictions on training at a site can be applied for either safety or site retention reasons.

Where a site is to be used for instruction, the onus is on the Instructor to ensure that the site and prevailing conditions are suited to the skill level of the student, and the training operations to be conducted.

4.1.5 Launch/landing sites acquisition, development or maintenance

The SAFA is not presently positioned for the direct funding, development or maintenance of landing/launch sites or other such infrastructure, however may offer favourable loan facilities for such purposes, to incorporated RA's or affiliated sports clubs, subject to available funds, and agreed terms.
Club loan applications should be accompanied by documented support by the relevant Regional Association with which the club is affiliated.

4.1.6 Site Guides

The Australian National Site Guide (http://siteguide.org.au/index.html) is a resource recommended for use by clubs & flying site administrators. It enables clubs to fulfil their affiliation requirements whilst providing pilots, including visitors, critical site access & use rules, protocols and contact details.

Further details and information can be found on the '*Notes for Site Managers*' tab within the site guide.

All site managers are encouraged to ensure their sites and the information shown in the National Site Guide is as accurate and up to date as possible, or alternately, is linked to an up-to-date, maintained, club site guide.

There are several ways site information is displayed in the ANSG. Site administrators may choose either.

1. The ANSG provides minimum information; Site name, rating and contact details.
2. The ANSG provides minimum information, and a link to the administrating clubs site guide.
3. The ANSG provides minimum information, a link to the administrating clubs site guide, and may provide other info such as flight hazards, landowners, flight conditions, etc.
4. The ANSG is used by the site managers as THE only site guide and contains ALL known information for the site.

4.1.7 Use of Sites for Flight Checks or Examination Requirements

Site administrators should note;

- For the purposes of SAFA specified flight check/examination requirements, any launch site listed within the National Site Guide, and appropriately rated by the site administering club or authority, is considered a Classified or Gazetted site.
- For the purposes of club affiliation responsibilities to SAFA Operations Management for the supervision and control of operations at sites within their area, any launch site listed within the National Site Guide, and identified with a club contact or responsibility details, is deemed ‘as designated’ by the SAFA Operations Manager.

5 Land Owner Information

What are Hang gliding and Paragliding?

Hang Gliding is an aviation sport that commenced in the 1970s, with its sister sport, Paragliding, starting about fifteen years later. Today, there are over 3200Sports Aviation Federation of Australia (SAFA) members..

Unlike uncontrolled sports (e.g. kite surfing, horse riding), hang gliding and paragliding are highly regulated throughout every Australian State and Territory. In fact, the sports are regulated by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), and all pilots are required by law to be certificated by SAFA, must complete theory exams, practical training, and maintain their licence and currency to continue flying, exactly as do pilots of more conventional aircraft. See Appendix A.

Hang glider craft comprise special sailcloth material on an aircraft aluminium/carbon frame (rather like kites), while paragliders are ram-air aerofoils shaped by Kevlar lines (rather like elongated-shaped parachutes). The pilot is suspended within the frame or at the base of the lines respectively, and controls the craft by weightshift and by altering wing shape. Every glider flying in Australia has been manufactured and tested to mandatory, internationally-prescribed aircraft standards.

How Do they Stay Up?

Both hang gliders and paragliders are lightweight, motor-less, *completely silent,* 'free-flight' craft that can only launch from hills and ridges of a particular shape, which directs airflow smoothly upwards and allows them to soar for as long as the wind continues. In some places, thermals – rising columns of air – also let pilots stay aloft by spiralling up like eagles and, by flying between thermals, to travel cross-country, as do sailplanes.

Free-flight hang gliders and paragliders can also be towed up by cars, winches or aircraft pilots release from the line and continue to climb in thermals. Towing is from large, flat, open – and usually remote – inland paddocks.

Hang gliders and paragliders land more like butterflies than conventional aircraft, with slow speeds and in small spaces. Experienced pilots can land consistently on or within a few metres of their intended spot and, in stronger winds, hover or descend vertically. Because they are gliders, they do not "fall" out of the sky when the wind stops –pilots simply glide to the ground and land, like birds.

Hang glider and paraglider pilots in Australia fly in every state & territory from private, council and state-owned land.

Powered paragliders and Powered hang gliders

Powered paragliders and powered hang gliders have small motors to provide thrust. Because they can launch from almost any, mostly flat, open space, they are usually specifically excluded from the unique hill/slope type sites required by the free-flight forms of the sport. The motors are specially designed to limit noise and are small enough to be carried on the pilots back. There are further minimum heights, and flight path limitations placed on the pilots by, to ensure engine noise is no more noticeable than conventional aircraft.

Who are pilots?

Pilots come from every walk of life, and the sport itself promotes self-belief and a healthy respect for the environment and others, irrespective of background or status. The demographic is an older one, with most pilots aged in their 40s or above.

You, Your Land and Your Local Flying Club

Although the sports are regulated nationally by CASA and administered by the SAFA, they are managed at State level by well-organised, voluntary, non-profit Regional Associations and, locally, by Clubs. It will usually be your local club member with whom you'll discuss and agree terms to access your property.

Flying sites are very rare and very precious, and you can be confident that you and your land will be treated with the greatest respect. Your goodwill and satisfaction are essential to us, and you'll decide the exact conditions under which pilots may operate from your land.

All around Australia are sites on private land where Clubs have maintained excellent decades-long relationships with landholders. Financially and/or physically, clubs regularly assist landholders in weed control, fencing, revegetation, track upkeep and other maintenance. Some landholders even enjoy going up with pilots for tandem flights.

Arrangements may be in the form of licences, leases, consent or simple verbal agreements, with or without access limitations/rules or site fees. We can provide a pro-forma consent agreement if required.

Lambing/fire season/erosion or other concerns?

Decades of successful partnerships between landholders and clubs have created effective Pilot Codes of Conduct that addresses landowner concerns. See Appendix B.

These may include seasonal restrictions, such as;

During lambing

When access tracks are very wet

During fire season

Harvesting

Insurance and Indemnity

The SAFA has a A$20M policy of insurance that covers the landholders, SAFA members, its Regional Associations, and clubs: The cover specifically indemnifies, and thereby protects *"owners of property or land being used for the insureds activities".* Copies of our Certificate of Insurance currency and policies are available on the SAFA website www.safa.asn.au, or we can provide printed copies on request.

What about Plants and Wildlife?

Unlike sports that require infrastructure such as clubhouses or playing fields, the environmental impact of Hang Gliding and Paragliding is negligible - much less than that of cycling or even walking. With a 'playing field' in the air, the sports have minimal effects on vegetation, and this is reflected in the existence of many sites within National Parks around Australia. When parked, a hang gliders footprint on the ground is only about the area of a single human foot; a paraglider is constructed of fabric that has similarly little impact. Birds quickly become accustomed to us, and 'fly neighbourly' agreements easily accommodate sensitive raptor breeding seasons in National Parks.

Any Other Questions?

The Appendices contain more detailed information about hang gliding and paragliding operations, if you would like to know more, please feel free ask your local Club Representative or contact Sports Aviation Federation of Australia direct.

APPENDIX A

Operational Regulations & Controls

1.1 Flight Operations

Controls and standards are established for hang gliding and paragliding operations throughout Australia by ensuring pilots and the equipment they operate comply with the Sports Aviation Federation of Australia Operations Manual and Civil Aviation Regulations.

The Operations Manual provides the framework and rules for all flying activities under the jurisdiction of the SAFA. This framework includes measures to provide for the effective management of pilot safety and measures specifically designed to protect members of the public and their property. Key areas covered by the Operations Manual and Civil Aviation Regulations include:

Pilot and Aircraft Certification

Site ratings

Guidelines covering launch and landing zones; and the

Mandatory National Safety System.

An overview of these key areas is provided below.

1.2 Pilot and Aircraft Certification

Hang gliding and paragliding are highly regulated at every level and in a consistent manner throughout every Australian State and Territory. All hang glider and paraglider pilots, as required by Commonwealth law, must be members of, and be flight certificated by, the Sports Aviation Federation of Australia. Just as for pilots of other aircraft, certification follows the successful completion of a mandated practical training syllabus and theoretical examinations under a Chief Flight Instructor at a Registered Flight School. Similarly as for pilots of all aircraft, hang glider and paraglider pilots must maintain a minimum number of logged hours annually to remain current and to renew their membership.

All hang glider and paraglider aircraft are manufactured to International prescribed aircraft standards regulated and stringently tested by the Deutscher Hangergleiterverband (DHV) in Germany, the United States Hang Gliders Manufacturing Association (USA) and/or the British Hang Gliding Association (UK), which certify all gliders.

1.3 Site Ratings

The SAFA has in place a series of standard pilot experience ratings (PG1 thru 5, Supervised, Intermediate and Advanced, plus Instructor and Safety Officer levels). To minimise the potential for accidents, a site rating correlating to pilot certificated flight experience ratings is applied. This rating reflects the difficulty of either the launch, flight conditions, or landing for the particular location (the rating for a site may be different for high and low tide conditions, for example). Pilots fly only sites suited to their piloting standard and this is overseen at Club level by designated Safety Officers, Senior Safety Officers, and mentoring by experienced pilots.

1.4 Controls over landings and landing zones.

Landings are performed in accordance with the SAFA operations manual and regulated under Civil Aviation Regulations.

Flights do not confer on an operator of a hang glider or paraglider, any rights as against the owner or occupier of any land on or over which the operations are conducted, or prejudice in any way the rights

and remedies which a person may have in respect of any injury to persons or damage to property caused directly or indirectly by the hang glider.

Pilots will not select or designate as an intended landing area, nor land on, except in circumstances of emergency, any property in respect of which permission to land has been expressly denied.

When flying sites are on private property, typically farmland, in all cases Clubs have received the specific agreement of landholders to either gain access to or launch or landing sites through their property or to launch and land on their property.

Agreements always require pilots to respect the wishes of landholders at all times.

1.5 The Mandatory National Safety Management System

All accidents and incidents are subject to the SAFA's CASA-mandated Safety Management System, which allows for reporting, analysis and dissemination of information to the relevant Aviation authorities and SAFA members. The reporting system identifies causes and risks, and aims to prevent recurrence: pilot safety is a high priority for those involved at every level of our sport.

All Clubs implement training in the form of First Aid Courses, information nights, Safety Officer updates and licence upgrades for their members. There is also much informal safety-oriented discussion in online forums.

APPENDIX B

EXAMPLE PILOT CODE OF CONDUCT

The [CLUB] has the use of several sites. Please be sensible. Follow all site rules and help us to keep our flying sites. Management of flying sites is everyone's responsibility - pilots need to 'fly neighbourly'.

In joining the [CLUB] you have agreed to:

- Treat landowners well: without their goodwill we can't fly; don't take them for granted. Provide landowners with signed waivers where required.
- If you open a gate you close it; If there is more than one car you still close it behind all of them, at the next gate somebody else does it all for you.
- Not cause any grass or bush fire – obey landowner rules (Petrol cars have very hot catalytic convertors).
- Not smoke on launch sites or in landing areas.
- Report fire outbreaks if you see one (e.g. when flying or on launch) to CFS via UHF radio, VHF radio or telephone.
- Display a Red Streamer if you are a 'Supervised' rated pilot.
- Not bring pets on launch or to landing areas
- Not take vehicles into cropped paddocks
- Keep vehicle speeds low and appropriate to the conditions – avoid/minimise creating dust.
- Not land where permission has been denied by the owner, or in other prohibited areas.
- Not climb over fences - use the gates.
- Not litter and to take your litter home.
- Not overfly prohibited areas.
- Not land in stocked or cropped paddocks.
- Be aware of transmission of stock or fauna disease, especially if landing on farms.
- Minimise any environmental damage; be particularly careful with inadvertent transplant of seeds and use established paths or tracks wherever possible.
- Beware of power lines - they may be strung between tree lines; they are located near most buildings.
- Limit the number of vehicles using access roads where possible.
- Treat all members of the public well and with respect, inform them of your sport and encourage their interest.
- Obey all conditions and requests from landowners, including Council Officers.
- Fly only at sites for which you hold the relevant rating. The only exception is that a Safety Officer present on the day may rule that conditions at the time are suitable for a pilot who holds a rating only one level below the rating normally required.
- If you are a visiting pilot you must contact a local pilot to obtain the latest information regarding access procedures, hazards and any other protocol pertaining to that site, and you must agree to abide by the above code of conduct before flying in [REGION]

6 Document Change History

Date / Who	Change Made	Approved By & When
October19 M Pike	First issue	Board, November 2019
December19	Biosecurity added, Land owner information added.	