

Tips, advice and guidance on being a BMGC Basic Instructor.

BMGC – Basic Instructor guidance

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BGA guidelines – do not exceed.

Trial lessons should only be flown in appropriate weather conditions.

DO NOT:

- Launch into cloud
- Launch in rain, or if the flight is likely to be in flown in rain.
- Launch with rain/snow/ice on the gliders flying surfaces
- Launch with misted canopy.
- **DO SEEK ADVICE FROM THE INSTRUCTOR IN-CHARGE (Inst 1) BEFORE LAUNCHING IF:**
- The wind is turbulent. (Varying by more than 10 kts).
- The wind is strong (> 20 kts)
- Cloud base is less than 1200'
- Flight visibility is less than 5km
- Launching above more than 4/8th cloud
- The trial lesson must remain within safe gliding range of the airfield.
- The trial lesson should be flown from and to a normal operating area on the airfield. Nonstandard circuits should be avoided where possible.
- Trial lesson flight in gaggles should be avoided.

General advice

- Trial lessons must be the safest flying that you do – you are now responsible for others.
- It is the trial lesson passenger's flight not yours. Establish what they would like to get out of the experience and do your best to accommodate them whilst keeping in mind the commercial implications for the club. Overriding factor though is safety.
- Do a walk- round of the glider before you take it as P1 for the first time for the day. You might find something you don't like, such as a broken trailing edge as I did a few months ago.
- Make sure you have an idea on the contents of the flight, the weather, number of gliders already airborne, soaring condition etc. Remove as many surprises from the flight as you can before you get airborne. Think ahead.
- The pre-launch checks are to be done thoroughly. Eventualities decided every time, although you keep them to yourself.
- Keep an eye on changing weather. Land early if you think conditions are changing drastically; should you have got airborne in the first place?
- Don't leave it late leaving the ridge and give yourself plenty of time for a safe circuit. Try not to get caught up in a mass landing.
- We aim to give 30-40 minutes. However if you have trial lessons backing up and are running out of time you must seek help or possibly reduce the duration a little.
- It can get busy so keep the momentum going and turn the trial lessons round as quickly as you can.
- However you must have regular breaks; don't get too tired, keep the fluid intake going and eat. If that means the next customer has to wait, they wait..
- From now on you are part of the instructor team so behave like one. You are setting the example so when flying make sure your flying reflects your status.

- If you see dodgy flying (i.e. poor circuit planning or approach control, antics on the ridge such as beating up walkers etc) do not ignore it. Report what you have observed to the duty instructor so that they can go and have a chat with the pilot.
 - The worst thing you can do, is do nothing.

Weather

Review and observe the BGA guidance. If the weather steps outside these guidelines then stop the trial lessons.

- Remember it is their experience and we want it to be as good as possible. Flying in rough weather or rain is not going to enhance that experience.
- Overriding position is SAFETY. Will it be safe to fly the trial lesson taking on board the conditions, glider type and your experience?

If you have to cancel trial lessons the easiest thing to use as reason is *'the conditions are outside our national bodies recommended limits'*. Most will understand. They need to re-book through Liz in the office and no one else.

Apply the limits to our airfield

- 15- 20kts of SW wind is within the BGA guidelines but could be very bumpy in the back bowl, especially if there is any wave interference – so consider if that is suitable for your passenger or not.
- 15kts east could be very good wave, but how rough will the launch, circuit and landing be?
- 15kts NE though is subtly different. There still might be lots of sink in the circuit but it might well be smooth. The Pandy could be working but that carries the risk of landing out if it all goes wrong. Mynydd Troed might be more suitable if it is not too rough!
- SE 10kts with a hot day – can you launch safely?
 - Am i in the K21 which needs a longer ground run for instance?
- 1200' or more cloud base could have the cloud sitting very close to or on our mountains. Do not launch. Wait for the base to be well above the mountain tops first.

Work with the more experienced Inst 1 to come to a decision. Perhaps wait for the first flights to report back.

Soaring conditions

Ridge

- Any sort of wind against the ridge – use but do not release below ridge top height. Take the tow to at least a couple of hundred feet above.
 - It gives your passenger time to settle down and takes the pressure of you being close to the ridge early in the flight.
- Soaring below ridge top height is ok and can be quite exhilarating for the passenger. But do so safely and don't allow yourself to get low.
- If you suspect the ridge to be soft consider taking a higher tow and floating down to ridge top height

Use of Thermals

- Exercise care. Going round in circles is the quickest way to make your passenger feel unwell. So if you choose to or have to use thermals to stay airborne, keep the bank angle to no more than 20deg and keep the flying as smooth as possible.
 - As a result, your climb rate will be slower but at least your passenger will hopefully be ok.
- If other gliders join you, be aware that they will want to be a lot tighter into the core. If you are getting in the way move off to the next thermal.

Wave

- No problem to use. Take a good tow to make sure you get established ok if that is the way in. However do consider the effects of any rota and therefore how bumpy it might be
- Consider the effect of any strong sink in the circuit.
- Be very careful if you get high and there is even the vague possibility of the cloud base filling in. THINK SAFETY FIRST.

No soaring conditions

Take a high tow to a maximum of 3000'. Explain that there might not be any rising air so it will be a gentle float back to the airfield.

Only use this option if you cannot guarantee to remain airborne through soaring.

Keep within gliding range.

- Keep within gliding range of the airfield and up wind if local soaring (thermal). So being 4000' over Brecon is fine, 2000' isn't.
- Going down to Hay-Bluff is something we do all the time, but now consider it if the conditions are soft. Technically, 1500 feet at Hay-Bluff is on the edge of being out of gliding range. It is ok but you have to be certain you can get back.
- Down the Cwmdru to the screed slope is probably not suitable unless you are absolutely certain you can get back ok.
- You should never have to land out with a trial lesson. Of course, it can occasional go wrong, so you land out if it is the safest option. But you really shouldn't get yourself it that position in the first place.

Looking after your passenger

Chat to your trial lessons

Find out what they want out of the flight. Remember it's their experience.

Some will be confident, some will be very scared.

Establish how heavy they are – clearly you have to be within the placard limits. If you doubt their weight, then put them on the scales!

- If they are too light, add ballast. Be careful if close to the lower limit.
- With overweight do not be tempted to fly them without a parachute.
- Exercise caution if flying close to either end of the placard limit. The glider handling will be subtly different.

Some might be model pilots or have an interest in aviation – make sure they get to handle the controls.

Some just want to enjoy the view. You have to suss it out as you go.

Either way give them plenty of reassurance as you go.

Remember the take off, release (the noise of the release itself), getting close to the mountains, and the landing (the use of airbrakes for instance) will be the most alarming parts of the flight.

Therefore try to explain what you are about to do before you do it.

Passengers - flying the glider.

In reality a good proportion won't even want to have a go but it is always worth encouraging. If they have any sort of aviation background, then even more so.

- Obvious candidates are those who are or have flown something in the past. Less obvious might be model fliers or youngsters using the Microsoft simulator on their desktop.
- Try and establish this before you get airborne.
- In most cases it will be easier to push the rudder pedals right back and just focus on the control column.
- Most will find that just as rewarding. Do remember to keep up with them on the rudder though!
- You must be the handling pilot below 500' AGL.

Passengers – feeling unwell

- Most will have a tolerance level way below yours for any bumps, 'G', circling etc. So your flying has to be as smooth as possible.
- Discourage them doing video filming – it is a quick route to the sick bag.
- Make sure you have a sick bag in the cockpit pocket (check for any holes!) before you launch, but be discrete about it.

Brief them that if they start to feel 'uncomfortable' you will try and do something about it.

Sure signs of airsickness:

- They stop talking to you, are not relaxed, their head is ridged, they want ventilation and sometimes the back of their neck goes pale.
- Remember some will not want to admit to you that they feel unwell. So if they don't say anything, ask.

If it is a yes or not sure then level the wings and fly to the smoothest air you can find whilst heading back to the airfield. If there is time, height etc you might find that this is ok and you can continue or it might be easier to go and land as soon as safely possible.

If they are likely to be sick then get them to fish out the bag.

This could be the last call as it might make them use it! However don't leave it too late either, cause if they do throw up into the cockpit you will have two problems.

1. You will want to join them which isn't good.
2. You have to clean it up – which is equally not good.

If they have been sick, then treat them with compassion. They will usually be embarrassed. Offer to take the bag off them and dispose of it.

Aerobatics

Aerobatics can only be done if you are qualified to do so. Even then be careful.

- Some think it will be good only to find it makes them feel sick. So if you do decide to do some work up to it slowly? Try perhaps some stalling and tight turns first.
- The vast majority will just want to look at the view the right way up!

As a guide, in the hundreds of trial lessons I have flown, I have turned trial lessons upside down less than a dozen times.

You as a BI

BI annual renewal

BGA renewal requirements are as follows and can be found in the Laws & Rules. It is a minimum not a target.

Revalidation (ratings lapse 12 months after date of issue unless revalidated):

- Minimum of 20 hours and 30 launches in the 12 months previous to the revalidation of which:
- 5 hours or 25 launches should be instructing and
- 10 hours or 50 launches should be solo
- Annual standardisation check with CFI or BI Coach/Examiner

If the minimum requirements listed above are not met then you have to re-new with the BI coach or Examiner.

Renewal is split into quarters depending on your position in the alphabet.

The BGA will send you and me a reminder so make sure they have your correct email address.

Your own flying

You have to do sufficient to renew each year. Remember it is a minimum not a target.

- Aim for 50/50 on solo and instruction.
- Remember, flying trial lessons will be the safest flying you do, so solo flying is very important for your own development and to maintain your judgement, airmanship and handling skills which you have worked so hard to get to become a BI in the first place.
- If you let these go, not only will your Annual BI check with me be more difficult, but the next leap to Ass Cat rating will be even more challenging!

Simply put, you should use the solo flying to push yourself, flying in more challenging conditions, much further away from the airfield etc. Oh and remember it's also meant to be fun!

Flying visitors as passengers on Trial lessons can be a very rewarding experience. Get it right and your passenger will have a huge grin on their face and find the whole experience fantastic. If it goes really well they might even join and start gliding for themselves!