

Communication

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In the last month or so there have been a couple of incidents that could have had serious consequences. The first one involved a tow plane accomplishing a downwind landing on 27 while a takeoff was commencing on 09. A takeoff abort resulted along with a go-around by the tow plane. Sporty! A glider-in-tow takeoff abort is inherently risky...something you need to think about ahead of time. For one, can you **IMMEDIATELY** find the rope release? If you fly multiple glider variants that may not be as simple as it sounds. (Technique: I keep the back of my hand on the ball so I can quickly find and pull it if need be.)

The second event involved a simulated rope break where the glider turned around to find there were 3 approaching contest aircraft landing from the opposite direction. Quick thinking and directive action by Dan Reagan on the radio helped avoid an accident.

What is a common thread between these two incidents? Communication! While it can be said that gliders and other aircraft have historically flown and can safely fly today without a radio, who can argue with a speed-of-light device that can instantly bring critical situational awareness to aircraft that are coming into conflict?

Whether on the ground or in the air, please have a radio at hand. We have sufficient handheld radios for each 2-33 as well as for the Crew Chief and one other ground crew member. For those on the ground, the radio needs to be on your person and not on the picnic table or in the golf cart. Please ensure the radio is operating, the volume is up, you are on 123.300, and that you are familiar with its operation. The handheld radios we have are confusing to operate, especially if they get off frequency. Please reference the laminated guide in the trailer or the digital copy on the CCSC website for a simplified overview of how to operate the radio.

A couple of other considerations. If a rope break is pre-planned, recommend that the instructor ensure that the tow pilot knows about the plan and that the tow pilot broadcasts that over the radio as part of his takeoff radio call. That will provide an opportunity for aircraft approaching the field to be aware and adjust their pattern, verbally deconflict landing lanes, or make a directive radio call for the rope break exercise to be terminated. Also, if the ground crew is aware that a rope break is planned and they note any aircraft anywhere in the pattern, they must not allow the takeoff roll to commence.

Lastly, the radio can only be as good as the ears and attention of the recipients. Please prioritize listening to the radio just prior to takeoff and as you approach the field. If you hear a call and are unsure of what was said, ask for the transmission to be repeated.