



Hang Gliding and Paragliding

Hang Gliding and Paragliding are adventure sports that can be performed individually or tandem. While the equipment used is designed to be as safe as possible, and experienced jumpers take every precaution to ensure nothing goes wrong, the sport is inherently dangerous. Statistics found on the U.S. Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association website shows that 50 people have died from these two sports between 2014 and 2018. In another study by the World Journal of Emergency Medicine demonstrated that paragliding accidents that resulted in nonfatal injuries are roughly 4.5 times higher than fatal ones.

Step 1: IDENTIFY THE HAZARDS: Let's look at the hazards associated with Hang Gliding and Paragliding:

- Lack of proper training (Formal school or instruction; Sky Diving Expert)
- Lack of experience (Not following guidelines of SOP 12-02 Pilot Proficiency System USHPA)
- Strong winds
- Landing area
- Glider failure
- Incorrect equipment
- Entangling with other gliders

Step 2: ASSESS THE RISK: Then assess the impact of each hazard in terms of potential loss and severity:

- Do I have enough training? Is the pilot following guidelines of SOP 12-02 Pilot Proficiency System from the USHPA?
- Sufficient meteorology training? Wind go/no-go criteria?
- Familiar with rules that govern sport?
- Could I be blown into nearby power lines or into the road or water?

Step 3: MAKE RISK DECISIONS: Once you have identified the hazards and assessed the associated risk, you should develop risk control options. Start with the most serious risk

first and select controls that will reduce the risk to a minimum consistent with mission accomplishment. Decide on some controls that can be employed to reduce or mitigate the hazards:

- Become an experienced Pilot (H-2/P-2 minimum to fly under supervision, H-3/P-3 for independent flying) from a certified Hang Gliding/Paragliding school.
- Verify condition of equipment.
- Buddy checks prior to launching.
- Find a legal place to fly where there will be no interference from outside authorities to distract you. Do not attempt at odd hours or in darkness.
- Verify local site ratings.
- Determine a go/no-go criteria for local winds. Don't jump if winds are over the limit you feel comfortable with.
- Scout area prior to launching. Make sure landing zone is clear. Use assistants to keep landing zone clear.
- Give yourself plenty of distance/time between pilots and objects. Determine space available at launch point.

With selected controls in place, decide if the benefit outweighs the risk. If risk outweighs benefits or if assistance is required to implement controls, communicate with higher authority in the chain of command. You need to either accept the risk, avoid the risk, reduce the risk, or spread the risk. Do not make dumb decisions.

Step 4: IMPLEMENT CONTROLS: Once you select appropriate controls, implement them! A plan is only good if it is followed.

Step 5: SUPERVISE: As always, the situation is subject to change quickly. Monitor the situation and adjust as necessary to keep things under control. Hang Gliding and Paragliding are more dangerous than BASE jumping and Sky Diving. Use risk management to make your experience memorable and safe. No one wants an outing to turn into a tragedy!

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Date