

TOW PILOT QUICK REFERENCE CARD V1.a

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY

Provide **safe, smooth, predictable tow launches** and maintain separation from glider at all times.

BEFORE ENGINE START

- Aircraft inspected (airframe, prop, linkages)
 - Tow release mechanism checked (positive open & close)
 - Towline condition checked (no knots, frays, weak links correct)
 - Radio range check complete
 - Fail-safe set (throttle idle)
 - Wind direction confirmed
 - Briefed with assigned glider pilot
 - Agreed tow direction, pattern, release area & emergency plan
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BEFORE TAKE-OFF

- After hooking up the tug pilot will remind the glider pilot to check all glider controls while the tug pilot also checks the tow plane controls.
- The glider pilot will stand next to the tug pilot in the designated pilot area so that they can clearly communicate with each other during the towing
- Tug pilot must also check the tow line is sitting above the tail plane

- Tug pilot will gently move the tow plane forward to take up any slack in tow line.

- Glider ready & wings level
 - Towline straight, no slack snags
 - Flight Line Director (FLD) clearance received
 - Call:
“Tow taking off”
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TAKE-OFF

Smooth progressive throttle

- Keep straight roll — no sudden rudder inputs
- Lift off gently — allow glider to fly off
- Maintain shallow climb until safe speed established

⚠ DO NOT rotate steeply

⚠ DO NOT out-climb glider

CLIMB

- Establish steady climb at agreed airspeed
- Avoid abrupt turns
- Use gentle, coordinated bank
- Monitor glider position continuously

- Before the tug pilot intends to turn, they must advise the glider pilot the direction they intend to turn so that the glider pilot can ensure the glider is positioned correctly for the turn.

If glider high → shallow climb

If glider low → reduce climb angle slightly

RELEASE PROCEDURE

- Level wings
- Smooth straight flight
- Ensure safe release height
- Call:

“Releasing”

- Release towline
- Maintain straight line briefly

After release:

- Gentle descending turn away from glider
 - Clear circuit path
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EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

If Glider Releases Early:

- Maintain climb briefly
- Check line
- Circuit and land normally

If Towline Breaks:

- Continue straight ahead
- Climb to safe height
- Circuit and land

If Glider in Difficulty:

- Maintain steady attitude
- Avoid abrupt manoeuvres
- Release immediately if unsafe

Engine Failure Below Safe Height:

- Land straight ahead
 - DO NOT turn back
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GOLDEN RULES

- ✓ Smooth and predictable
- ✓ Glider safety first
- ✓ No aerobatics on tow
- ✓ Always follow FLD instructions

Some information taken from VARMS Guide.

