SCOTTISH GLIDING CENTRE

SAFETY NEWSLETTER

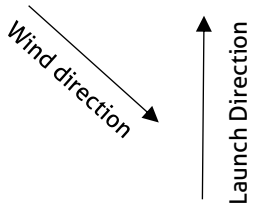
Topic of the month: April 2025

Crosswind take-off

Not all take offs are straight into wind. Most times there will be a crosswind component during a launch. Do you know how much crosswind you get for a given wind speed and wind direction?

Here are some examples:

Let's say there is a 10kn wind coming from the left



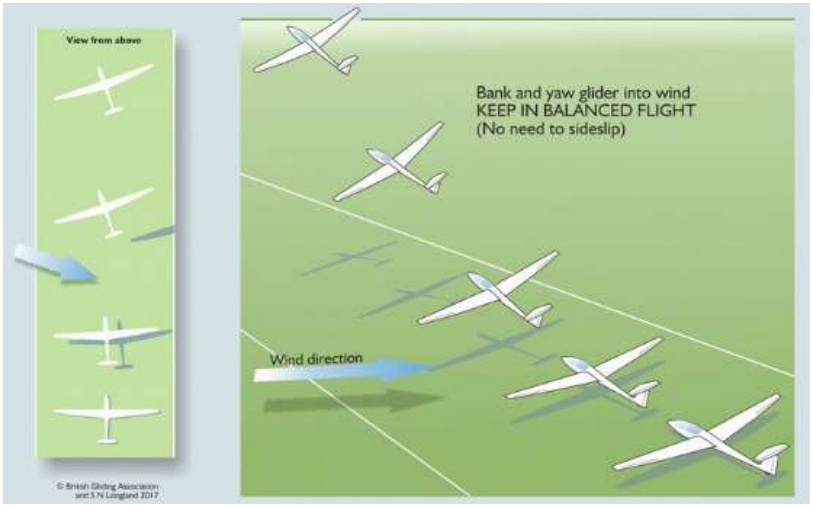
- If it's at 30° to your launch, the crosswind component is 5kn
- If it's at 45° to your launch, the crosswind component is 7kn
- If it's at 60° to your launch, the crosswind component is 8.6kn

As you can see, even if the wind direction is only at an angle of 30° from straight ahead, you already have half the windspeed as a crosswind component.

In addition, as you go up on the launch, the wind strength is likely to increase and the wind direction may also be different than it is on the ground.

What does this mean to the launch:

- With a crosswind component there could be some weathercocking that has to be counteracted or it can lead to a ground loop. An offset hook can increase the risk of weathercocking. If the cable is not laid out straight in front of the glider, this can also increase the risk. ***Make sure the cable is laid out straight in front of the glider.***
- The wing holder may feel a force up (or down) on the wing. ***If this is the case, stop the launch and tell the pilot***. Holding the downwind wing in a crosswind can reduce the risk of weathercocking.
- The into wind wing will want to rise and you may not have enough aileron control to counteract it. ***Release immediately before a wing reaches the ground***.
- As you get higher (on the winch launch) you will drift. ***Lower the into wind wing to counteract the drift***.



Safe Gliding
Wolf

Further info on safe winch launching is at https://members.gliding.co.uk/safety/safe-winching/