

Contents

- [Introduction](#)
- [Safety](#)
- [The Winch's Perspective](#)
- [The Skylaunch 2](#)
- [Daily Inspection \(DI\)](#)
- [Setting Up](#)
- [Launching](#)
- [Unplanned Emergencies](#)
- [Simulated Launch Failures](#)
- [Maintenance](#)

Safety

There are several risks associated with winch launching, both on the ground and in the sky. However, winch launching is still relatively safe if we mitigate these risks.

The glider is not going anywhere until you accept the launch. If you are not confident, always refuse to launch, and wait for the conditions to improve. You will never be punished or 'told off' for refusing a launch for safety reasons.

High-Speed Cables

The Skylaunch winch's engine can produce over 300 horsepower, and the Dyneema cable we use is very light. This means that the winch cables, even at idle power, can move very quickly. Never touch or stand near the cables whilst the winch is in gear.

Failing Parachutes

Whilst it is unlikely that falling Dyneema will cause much harm to someone, being hit by the parachute or strop will (at best) hurt a lot! The risk of cables falling outside the airfield should be avoided, and a launch should not be continued if a substantial risk to people or property is likely. If in doubt, do not start a launch until you feel it is safe to do so.

Launch Failures

Launch failures are inevitable, and you should be able to react to them promptly and correctly. They will be covered further in this guide and in your training, however best judgement should always be exercised.

AIRPROX

AIRPROX (or Air Proximity Reports) are mandatory reports which must be made by pilots after a near-miss. Before launching an aircraft, we must ensure that there is no traffic which we believe may conflict with the launching glider. Keep in mind what that glider may do if it has a launch failure.

FlySafe Reports

If you are involved in an incident or unsafe situation, consider [creating a FlySafe report](#). These reports are reviewed by the CFI and Safety Officer and are used to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future.

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