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Daily Inspection (DI)

The BGA Operational Regulations require that all launch equipment is adequately inspected before use:

“24. Launching Equipment Inspection. All equipment used for launching, including the winch guillotine, must be inspected each day before use.”

Just like gliders, the winch and its cable retrieve vehicle are inspected daily before being released into service. The items listed here are the minimum requirements, so feel free to add your own checks if you deem necessary.

If the winch has been marked as unserviceable (U/S), it must be inspected by the Winchmaster or someone authorised by them before it is used again.

The Winch

Fuel

The winch should have adequate fuel for an entire day of launches. While there are no set minimums, anything less than at least 1 full tank would be inadvisable.

Oil

The oil dipstick should be checked to ensure the oil level is between the minimum and maximum lines. If there is not enough oil, it must be topped up. This is done in practically the same way as you would for your car.

Brake Fluid

The brake fluid level for the drum brakes should be checked. Ensure that there is a reasonable amount of fluid in the reservoir.

Transmission Fluid

The transmission fluid dipstick should be checked to ensure that there is sufficient transmission fluid. Ensure that the fluid is still pink!

Engine Coolant

Carefully open the coolant fluid reservoir and check that there is water visible. When putting the cap back on, be very careful to not accidentally cross-thread the cap.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) Detector

Carbon monoxide is an odourless and colourless gas which we as humans cannot detect. CO can be formed during the burning of LPG (the fuel that the winch runs on). You cannot smell or see CO and, in high enough doses, CO inhalation is lethal.

The CO detector should be tested at least once a month. Press and hold the test/silence button on the detector. The alarm should sound. If you ever hear it whilst driving the winch, turn the winch off and step away - the winch is unserviceable until it is thoroughly inspected by the Winchmaster!

Cables

Check that the cables in the winch's drums are not tangled or damaged. Ensure that both drums can rotate freely - you can do this by hand.

Parachutes

Confirm that the parachutes are not damaged and are securely fitted to the cable.

Strops

Check that the strops currently attached to the cable are not damaged and have the right colour of sheath fitted. Ensure that the weak link is correctly fitted.

Guillotine

Check that the guillotine has not been used and is not blocked. The guard fitted to the guillotine lever should be in place.

The Retrieve Vehicle

Fuel

Ensure that the retrieve vehicle has enough fuel for a full day of launching.

Oil

Check that the retrieve vehicle is not running low on oil using its dipstick.

Engine Coolant

Finally, check that the vehicle has enough coolant fluid.

Inspection Logs

Once you have completed the DI, create a new entry in the winch's DI logbook, which you can usually find in the top left-hand corner of the winch, just above the radio.

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