LVVSA ADDENDUM TO HOOKUP AND WING RUNNER PROCEDURES

Assistance is always welcomed and helping others is part of the enjoyment of our sport. Any book on soaring will provide guidance on proper hookup procedures. However, the procedures do vary due to local customs, as well as unique local requirements. Further, as the result of several unfortunate accidents, the SSA has implemented additional requirements at soaring competitions. The following points are meant as a summary and not a substitute for a comprehensive study of this topic. They do reflect some of the additional considerations unique to flying from Jean.

In consideration of other pilots who may be waiting their turn for launch, or pilots desiring to land, the time a sailplane is on the runway should be kept to the absolute minimum necessary for a safe launch. Never rush a pilot to launch when they are not ready, since this is a very dangerous situation, but all preparations should be performed before moving the glider onto the runway in order to expedite the launch process.

All conversations with the pilot during the launch process must be directed towards the preparation and safe launch of the glider. Discussions about other subjects are distracting and inappropriate.

All preflight preparations must take place behind the hold-back line. When operating from the south end of the airport, the preflight area is the tie down area. Do not try to hookup north of this area or the tow pilot will refuse to tow and take the next person in line.

Before moving the glider onto the runway ask the pilot if he wants a positive control check. Encourage the pilot to say yes. Personally look at the critical areas on the glider to double-check the pilot's preflight. Some members are probably aware of the SSA's new procedure at contests of requiring the ground crew to "sign the wing" (actually a label at the root area) verifying that they have observed the glider to be airworthy.

If there are sufficent additional helpers, have the pilot strap in while still in the staging area. This will greatly speed up launches, since all that is necessary is to roll the glider onto the runway and hook up. This is even easier if rolling on the pavement in the north staging area. Help even experienced pilots with the belts. It speeds up the process and they will be grateful.

Look for aircraft in the pattern or low gliders and listen to the radio **before** moving a glider onto the runway. If, after moving onto the runway, the launch cannot be promptly and safely made, push off the runway, behind the hold-back line.

Before the hook up look at the whole rope, not just the weak link, making sure there are no knots or badly frayed areas. It is difficult for the pilot to inspect the rope. Show the weak link and tow ring to the pilot for his inspection. Hook up the tow ring and assist the pilot with the release check by pulling on the rope. Reconnect the tow ring and check the connection by applying tension.

Verify that the pilot has closed, locked, and checked the canopy. Pay particular attention to rear canopies when the pilot is flying solo in a two-place glider or to the passenger's canopy when the passenger is not a pilot. Clear all helpers from the area, step to the side of the wing and only then signal the tow plane to take up slack.

Help the pilot check for **conflicting** traffic. Looking up in the air does not satisfy this requirement. Aircraft in a normal pattern are not conflicts unless the glider remains sitting on the runway. Aircraft, particularly powered aircraft, in patterns opposite the conventional traffic flow of the day are serious potential conflicts.

Straight in, down-wind approaches also present conflict risks. Many times these pilots are confused and we have seen one land on the glider runway as we were preparing to launch from the other end. Commencing a tow simultaneously with a powered plane on the parallel runway is also a potential conflict. This is particularly a risk when there are crosswinds from the west. These situations also impact the pilot's emergency plan in the event of a rope break. Bring the situation to the attention of the pilot and let the pilot and tow pilot decide whether to delay the launch or take another course of action.

Once the pilot gives the thumbs up signal, raise the wing. If it is windy ask the pilot if he wants the wings supported level, up wind wing slightly down, or up wind wing slightly up. Yes, there are some gliders that require the up wind wing to be held slightly high in a cross wind take off and they are generally the real expensive gliders; so ask the pilot, don't assume. As a point of reference, supporting an up wind wing in a slightly down position; for most glass ships this means supporting the up wind wing so it is parallel to the runway. This means the amount of down is only the amount of the angle of the dihedral. This is not much. There is a tendency to support the wing too low, which causes control problems for the pilot.

Support the wing; do not hold on to it. Especially do not hold on to the leading edge or skids, wheels, etc. Holding the wing can cause the glider to pivot sideways when the tow begins which can get real ugly. The only exception to holding the wing is in a very strong cross wind when the wing runner is preventing the glider from weather vaning. Continue to support the wing as the tow begins for a few running steps. When the glider is moving faster than you are or you are out of breath you have gone far enough.

Thank you for your help in launching.