



Some Early Solo Notes

Congratulations on your solo in gliders. All of us at Sky Sailing are proud of your accomplishment and recognize its importance as you join our fellowship of pilots. Here are a few ideas we hope will help you as you build your experience and confidence.

- Plan your flight in at least general terms, prior to taking off. Consider such things as where you want to fly, what the other glider traffic is like that day, what the wind is and what the lift/sink and weather conditions may be.
- Visualize an inverted cone extending upwards from the airport. If, during the flight, you stay within this cone, you will be within gliding range of the airport. If you allow the glider to descend below the imaginary borders of this cone, the glider will be too low to insure the safe return of the glider back to the airport. Think about how the wind effects the shape and position of this cone, the cone will slant with the wind.
- Your solo flights will have some restrictions placed on them by your instructor, such as no ridge flying until having a signed logbook endorsement and cross wind check-outs. Perhaps most important however, is to set your own limits. On each flight allow yourself to take on a small new step and only slowly expand the maneuvers you do, the soaring you try and the areas you fly. Each new step should be, by itself, small and easily managed.
- If you have a low altitude line break or tow plane engine failure, don't try a downwind landing unless you are sure that 1) you are plenty high to easily make the downwind turn and runway line-up; 2) the wind and traffic conditions are not excessive. A full windsock is too much for a downwind landing. A well executed off field landing is no big deal and will be a better story to tell later on, than a lousy downwind attempt.
- Don't let the tow pilot tow you further from the airport than you are comfortable with and can glide back to the airport if you have a line break. You, not the tow pilot, are responsible for where the tow goes.
- Don't get off tow without knowing where the airport is.
- No spins, aerobatics, practicing right hand patterns or simulated rope breaks while solo.

- Have a good notion of the speed-to-fly for the aircraft and conditions you are in.
- Begin to organize yourself with other landing traffic before entering the pattern. Don't wait for others to enter the pattern while you get low. Upon reaching pattern altitude, enter the 45° entry leg and get on with it. By the time people have started the pattern, it should be clear who is going to land first, and your pre-landing check list should have been completed.
- Check for wind changes that may have occurred during the flight. Check which way gliders on the ground are pointed. You may need to change the direction of landing from the direction of your takeoff if the wind has changed.
- Don't try any fancy flying near the ground, don't try to roll the glider into a corner and don't depend on the wheel brake.
- If you believe that you are getting low, select an off field site early enough to allow for good planning. Execute a pattern into the field if possible. And then give us a call. DO NOT leave the sailplane unattended.
- Do practice your tow and flight maneuvers on each flight, expect the unexpected and feel free to ask question from any of the instructors.
- When the glider is on the ground, keep a hand on it. Don't leave it unattended. Always tie it down when you are finished.
- And again, congratulations on becoming a pilot. You are now the Pilot in Command, this additional responsibility means you must plan for safety - THINK AHEAD.
- You must fly with an instructor every 30 days to keep your solo privileges, do this so that each is an advancement in your learning.
- Finally, plan your expected progress. With each flight, choose some of the required flight maneuvers to practice toward the private check ride. Make each flight a step in the direction of your private license. Now would be a good time to get a Practical Test Standards so you will know exactly what will be expected of you. Practice you smoothness and prepare yourself for the transition into the SGS 1-36. It may be helpful to plan your flight so that each flight accomplishes something towards the private check ride. Start your studying for the written test. Ask your instructor about the badge qualification flights with the Soaring Society of America. Each flight ought to take you one step closer to the license, teach you something about soaring and make you a little safer.