

Safety Procedures for landings on SMQ RW08

We have all seen the increase in activity at SMQ this summer. There has been an influx of students and rides not to mention more power traffic and the rescue helo coming and going all day long.

We have been lucky so far with no serious issues but we have had many close calls with power traffic, spectators and ourselves. There has been a lot of talk about getting radios, doing better in the patterns and fixing the breaks in the gliders.

It's about time for us to institute some formal steps so that our luck does not run out. A few weeks ago I sent an email with a proposal to the group with some added guidelines and the reasons why. Please read it again below. If any one would like to discuss them with me please feel free to do so on our group site or privately. But consider them to be in effect starting this weekend.

These guidelines will include all pilots at SMQ: Students flying solo, commercial rides, private ships and instructors giving lessons. It takes into account that instructors will sometimes divert from SOP during the course of lessons. Of course, all guidelines are null and void in the case of emergencies. But they should not happen routinely.

The Guidelines

- Everyone is encouraged to fly with a radio and use it to announce your entry into the landing pattern for RW26. (it is not mandatory to have a radio, it is encouraged)
- All landings on RW08 must be announced, upon entry, on a radio and the standard landing pattern for RW08 is to be adhered to. (Radio use for RW08 is mandatory)
- When RW26 is in use there will be no use of RW08 if there is more than a 3kt tailwind. (If you have a doubt about the wind don't use RW08)
- When landing on RW08 the pilot is to bring the glider to a stop before the first glider parking space on the north side of the runway.

My message on 10/24

This Sunday we had the second RW8 incident of the season. The first was Rene's landing that almost caused a head on mid-air with the tow plane. Jay was towing and I think Doug going up in orange. Rene came into land without using the normal RW08 pattern and not announcing the landing on a radio. He didn't have one with him.

The good news is that we are having more activity at the end of the season. We have more ships with the club buying Jays 1-26 and Anthony's Russia. We have more pilots; Mike, Anthony and Jacob just soloing on Sunday.

The bad news is we are getting busy. On Saturday some visitor showed up with a bunch of kids that were running all over the field when I was on final in the 2-33. They were still running around while I was being towed back. On Sunday our new wing runner held my wing back so much on take off that Jay pulled his release fearing that I was going to run into the deck. We would have hit the deck and people but we did have enough momentum to turn to the right. We came to a stop even with the deck.

Ruth Ann and Keith are doing the best they can keeping the people and our new wing runner under control but I fear sooner or later something bad is going to happen if we don't start pulling in the reins a little now.

Some pilots are already steps in the name of safety. I am convincing my students to buy radios. I always have mine with me and they get to hear what's going on just before take off and landings. I am announcing most of my landings and they are hearing that. Doug also uses a radio. Rene just bought a transponder because of all the jet traffic. Bill just bought a receiver to also watch out for the jets. I think Brian L. has one to.

Now regarding RW08. Let me start by saying I've seen a power plane go through the rope into the road. Luckily no one was hurt and it was not hit by a car. I've seen Jay do go-arounds because he couldn't stop in time. I've see gliders come very close to hitting things several times. So lets set some rules about RW08 so none of our friends get hurt, we don't break our toys, we don't have insurance problems and Danny doesn't kick us off the field.

The real issues are landing gliders, with no brakes, downwind. They glide and roll a long way. Often we don't know their coming. On busy days there are lots of people around and there are launches one after the other on RW26.

My proposal for new guidelines:

- Not using RW08 on busy days, too many students and rides using RW26 (people gliders, students, in the way)
- Not using RW08 when there is a downwind component to it (no brakes)
- Come to a stop before passing where the red 2-33 is tied down (goal to aim for)
- Announce a RW08 landing on a radio so the tow pilot and others know you're coming (safety concerns)

As with all rules/guidelines you can do whatever is necessary in an emergency.

What do you think?

From Mike on 10/24

I like the idea. I've actually always felt that landing on 08 posed problems if you don't have a radio. The pattern for 26 keeps you well away from the powered runway, whereas for 08 you have to come around the trees and right over the 12 departure end. I've felt a lot of risk for a near miss there with both the powered planes and the departing gliders. Not sure if you were implying this but I'd say radio use should be mandatory for 08. We should also look at getting the gliders with radios in them up and running. I know the red 2-33 actually has one but no battery. We should change that.

As for the people problem, it's irritating me too. People just seem to be stupid and not realize that gliders are real planes and they can do damage. We should have signs posted in front of the car parking area warning people not to go unescorted onto the "hot zone" and tell them up front to keep their kids under control.

From Keith on 10/24

I would propose making it so that any glider that stops past the deck on 08 should be a "beer landing" in the same way touching down before it is instead of RW&B because it will never move.

I carry my hand held radio with me on every flight, but I find it next to impossible to safely fly the glider in the pattern while making the calls. If we could wire up a push-to-talk system similar to what the Russia has I feel it would be a great improvement.

Keith

Keith,

You're right about making radio calls "in" the pattern. Your right hand is on the stick and left hand on the spoiler handle. Make the call about entering downwind just before entering the pattern. That's it.

"Somerset traffic, glider 126 entering right downwind to runway 26 on the grass, Somerset."

Ron

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