

United States Hang Gliding Association Inc.

Recommended Emergency Procedures Outline

Introduction:

The best way to handle an emergency is to be prepared before one occurs. Standardized emergency procedures across the country will help minimize the risk to our members after an incident has happened, no matter where they fly within the United States.

There are three Categories of preparedness: A. Site; B. Pilot; and C. Search and Rescue

A. Site:

1. Post emergency procedures at every launch and landing zone if possible.
 - a) Site protocols and general information.
 - b) Pilots requirements and recommendations: Ratings, Safety Equipment. Etc.
 - c) Maps including street names, and addresses with directions to non addressable places (launch and landing zones). Include both permanent and handout type.
 - d) Emergency procedures.
 - e) Emergency Radio Frequencies: Radio frequencies everyone tunes to in case of emergency. Remember someone has to stay on the pilots frequency in case they can not change frequency.
 - 1) 151.625 (USHGA 1). Non licensed radio operating USHGA members can use this frequency.
 - 2) 146.520 National simplex frequency will not interfere with any radio repeater in the country. Most 2 meter radios don't get USHGA 1 without being modified.
 - f) Emergency phone numbers.
 - g) Rescue Equipment. Include rope, water, flashlight, topographical maps, first aid kit, space blanket, and folding saw. The kit should be kept in a knapsack or something easily carried to a remote location. Rescue should be left to the trained professionals whenever possible.

B. Pilot: Being prepared for an emergency is the best way to handle one.

- 1) Know and follow all site protocols, general information and emergency procedures before, during and after flying.
- 2) Carry proper safety equipment and know how to use it:

- a) Parachute
 - b) Helmet
 - c) Radio: (1) Let others know what radio frequency you are using. (2) Program your radio so you can easily tune into emergency frequencies if needed.
 - d) Dental Floss: Strong but small, compact, easy way to lower line down to rescuer to bring back rescue rope and equipment when trapped above your rescuer.
 - e) Whistle: A whistle can be heard much further away than a person's voice. It also takes a lot less effort for someone to blow into a whistle than yell especially when a person is hurt.
 - f) GPS: Having and knowing how to use a GPS along with a radio are the two best things to facilitate a rescue.
 - g) Mobile phone: Know the phone numbers of the pilots you're flying with.
 - h) Short length of rope in case you need to tie yourself into tree till rescue help shows up. Never try to climb out of a tree or lower yourself. It is far too risky to do this without help.
- 3) When flying XC try to make radio contact with someone else every 20 minutes. Let them know your location. If something was to happen to you at least someone would know where to start looking for you.
 - 4) Get some sort of CPR and first aid training. Prompt first aid may be the thing that saves your friend's life.

C. Search and Rescue:

- 1) Realizing there is an emergency involving a pilot is the first step. Remember never put yourself at risk.
- 2) All pilots should change radios to the designated emergency frequencies, check in and assist with rescue by following the lead of the person in charge.
- 3) Organization and someone to take charge is the next step. Person in charge coordinates all till the rescue is complete.
- 4) There are 4 questions that will help qualify how to handle the incident.
 - a) Is there going to be a delay of more than 5 minutes to make contact with pilot (via radio or with another person)?
 - (1) If able to make contact with pilot?
 - (a) Keep pilot calm.
 - (b) Recommend to pilot to stay in place till help arrives. If in tree or on cliff recommend he ties himself in till rescue arrives.
 - (c) Get as much information about his situation as possible (GPS coordinates, injuries, situation, in tree or on ground).
 - (d) While person in charge coordinates the next phases of rescue someone else stays in contact with pilot. Remember battery life of injured radio may be an issue if rescue takes a while

(2) If unable to make contact with pilot?

- (a) Locate the pilot is very important. *Note:* Someone might have to fly over pilot to get approximate GPS coordinates for rescuers to find the pilot
- (b) Assess the pilot's situation. Radio to person in charge with pertinent information (GPS coordinates, injuries and rescue information).

- b) Is pilot injured beyond minor injury or requiring further medical attention?
- c) Is search and rescue required especially where there are any circumstances requiring professionally trained personnel (Pilot landed in water, tree, cliff, or power lines involved)?
- d) Are there too few pilots available to handle the situation?

***** If you answer yes to any of these questions A through D you need to activate the Emergency Management System (EMS, 911) and continue to step 5.**

***** If you answer no to all these questions? This might be an incident that we can handle. Skip to step 6 for recovery procedures.**

5) Person in charge activates the Emergency Management System (EMS). If EMS is required, do not delay in calling them. Sooner EMS is activated the sooner the pilot will receive proper rescue and care.

a) In most places calling 911 on a phone will activate EMS. Be prepared to give dispatcher as much information as possible about the situation

(1) Note: when calling from mobile phone, the 911 operator does not know where you are calling from. So start with town and state. Then they will transfer your call to the local EMS.

Example of call: I am calling from West Rutland Vermont. We have a hang glider pilot crashed into a tree near Rt. 4 in West Rutland Vermont. He is about 75 feet in the tree and has a possible broken arm. We have GPS coordinates of his location and need to coordinate a tree rescue and first aid. We will have someone meet the police at the corner of Bridge and Cross St to coordinate the rescue.

(2) Note: Any rescue is better left to the trained EMS personnel. They constantly train for these situation and best know how to handle them with only a little input from us. The pilot's safety is the most important thing here.

b) Person in charge meets with EMS personnel at designated location and turns over control of situation to EMS. Person in charge will also find how we can assist them and integrate our special situation into their emergency procedures.

(1) This person should relate all information that might be needed for search and rescue including GPS coordinates, radio frequencies used and best way to access the pilot. Don't just tell them where to go. Arrange for someone to show them the way.

- (2) Remember, helicopters and gliders do not mix well. So be sure to consult EMS personnel about the use of helicopters. Many EMS will automatically dispatch a helicopter if search is indicated.
 - (3) If a search is required it might be better to request the use of a fixed winged aircraft instead.
 - (4) If helicopter is to be used, the helicopter pilot must know to avoid flying directly over hang gliders/paragliders. This will help prevent possible injuries to the hang glider/paraglider pilots. Gliders need to be secured or moved when helicopters are present.
- c) Person in charge informs all other pilots how they can assist EMS personnel. Skip to step 7.
- 6) Person in charge coordinates recovery when EMS is not required.
- a) Tips for coordinating recovery.
 - (1) Ground search should be done in teams of at least 3 people.
 - (a) One of the three should be trained in first aid if possible.
 - (b) All should have radios, and each should be tuned to a different frequency. Two radios monitor each of the site emergency frequencies, and the third monitors the frequency the pilot is on. An injured pilot might not be able to change his frequency.
 - (c) Each Group should have a GPS and know how to use it. Once you find the pilot you can radio other rescuers your GPS location. *Note:* Remember to save your location before setting out or entering woods or difficult terrain. That way you won't need to be rescued also.
 - (d) Bring water.
 - (e) Note the time of day and weather. Recovery may take a while. Are you going to need flashlights or warm clothes?
 - (2) Administer first aid that you have been trained for. If the pilot is unconscious or if a spinal injury is suspected, DO NOT attempt to remove the helmet or move the pilot.
 - b) Remember, at any time you can activate EMS, once you realize the situation has changed for the worse.
- 7) Person in charge is responsible to document incident and report it to Regional Director.