Coastal Soaring Association

**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP)**

 1 October 2024

A. **GENERAL**

1. All operations shall be conducted in accordance with applicable Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs), in accordance with aircraft operating handbook, placarded limitations, and within approved weight and balance limits.

2. All members acting as Pilot-in-Command (PIC) shall be current and qualified in the category and class of aircraft they are operating, and for carrying passengers in accordance with FARs 61.56 and 61.57.

3. All operations within the vicinity of the airport shall monitor and use the Common Traffic Advisory Frequency (CTAF) of 122.8 MHz.

4. Aerobatic maneuvers in Coastal Soaring Association (CSA) aircraft are prohibited.

5. Members flying Association gliders shall remain within safe gliding distance to return to the field as conditions and pilot experience warrant. Cross country flight in club ships can be approved by a club CFIG or experienced cross-country club member. Task must be left with OSO prior to departure.

6. Thermaling below 1000 ft AGL in Association gliders is strictly prohibited, and normal safety rules apply when thermaling with other gliders.

7. The PIC shall have final determination for the airworthiness of Association aircraft.

8. Any Association member may stop operations at any time for safety concerns.

9. The Operations/Safety Officer (OSO) or an Association Certified Flight Instructor–Glider (CFI-G) may ground any individual as they deem necessary. Such action shall be immediately reported to the Association President for action.

10. Association members must accomplish a checkout with a member CFI-G prior to acting as PIC of an Association glider. Backseat checkouts shall be at the discretion of an Association CFI-G.

11. While this SOP is primarily designed for operations at Atmore Municipal Airport (0R1), most of these procedures will still apply when the CSA operates elsewhere.

B. **GROUND OPERATIONS**

1. Association glider canopies shall remain closed whenever the glider is unoccupied and members are not actively engaged in cockpit-related activities. Members are encouraged to place sun blockers on the canopies to help prevent cockpit over-heating.

2. Only golf carts are to be used as tow vehicles on the runway. Golf carts must have a FAA approved flag displayed or light when operating on the movement area of the airport. Always assume the runway is active and exercise extreme caution. Carefully check and listen for traffic prior to approaching or crossing the runway; announce your intentions on the airport CTAF.

3. Personnel towing a glider shall be in possession of a radio monitoring CTAF.

4. Non-members shall be escorted by an Association member at all times while on the airport when involved in Association flight operations. While all members share the responsibility for greeting and escorting visitors, the Introductory ride PIC has ultimate responsibility for the safety of those passengers. Personnel who are not involved with Association flight operations should also be monitored during operations, and they shall remain clear of the runway and launching/landing aircraft.

5. Personal vehicles should not be driven through the west gate unless sailplane trailers are being towed onto or off of the ramp, or personal vehicles are required for aircraft maintenance. Personal vehicles should not remain parked on the west ramp once the glider trailer has been loaded/unloaded.

6. Personal vehicles may be driven through the east gate and parked near the t-hangar on the grass but clear of the taxiways and east ramp.

7. Once private ships are rigged, move vehicle and trailer clear of ramp onto grass, so as not to interfere with other aircraft or airport operations needing to use or access ramp.

8. Personal vehicles shall not enter the runway.

9. Golf carts, while not in use or unattended, shall be parked in the grass at least 10 feet from any paved surface, so as not to interfere with other aircraft or airport operations.

10. Do not place high side loads on the glider tailwheels by making tight turns while under tow on any hard surface. Whenever practicable, raise the tail off of the surface before changing directions.

**C. TOW-PILOT DUTIES**

1. The tow pilot shall preflight the tow plane in accordance with the appropriate checklist.

2. The tow pilot shall preflight the tow rope for condition and any knots, plus ensure the tow-plane release is operational.

3. The tow pilot shall ensure that gliders are towed for an upwind release unless otherwise requested by the glider PIC.

4. A tow pilot must be current and qualified in accordance with FAR 61.69 and conduct operations in accordance with FAR 91.309. Additionally, the tow pilot shall be current in tailwheel operations, when applicable, in accordance with FAR 61.57.

5. The tow pilot shall contact Pensacola Approach Control (850 266-6921), Whiting ODO (850 623-7475 weekdays only), and Rober Lahr (Skywarrior Chief Pilot) (850 602-2262 mobile or (850) 565-3657 office) prior to the first launch to inform them of the day’s glider operations. Pensacola Approach Control should also be contacted at the cessation of glider operations.

6. When the tow plane is not in use or unattended, it must be parked so as not to interfere with other aircraft or airport operations that may require access to or use of either ramp.

7. The tow pilot is responsible for securing the towplane at the end of daily operations.

8. The tow pilot shall maintain a log of launches to include, but not be limited to, aircraft, PIC, and tow altitude.

D. **OPERATIONS SAFETY OFFICER**

***It is understood that due to the nature of our operations, one person designated as the OSO for the day can be impractical. Association members should look to perform the OSO duties “by committee” if operational conditions warrant.***

1. During all operations, a club member shall oversee operations and act as OSO. This member shall be any member designated by the President as competent to safely oversee operations for the day.

2. The OSO has the authority to stop, correct, modify, or cease all operations should the situation arise. The safety-related decisions of the OSO are final.

3. The OSO shall actively manage the Association’s flight operations.

4. The OSO is responsible for keeping the runway clear of any person or object that might interfere with the Association’s safe flight operations.

5. The OSO shall monitor CTAF at all times.

6. The OSO should ensure that Association members, aircraft, and carts are on the runway the minimum time consistent with the safe preparation, launch, and recovery of aircraft. SAFETY FIRST, then efficiency.

7. The OSO should ensure Association members minimize the number of runway crossings by the carts, aircraft, and personnel.

8. The OSO is the point of contact in the event of any abnormal operation or occurrence.

9. All Association members are responsible for ensuring that Association gliders and equipment are properly secured, accounted for, and clear of trash at the end of operations.

E. **WEATHER**

1. Flight operations shall not be conducted on any runway where the crosswind component exceeds 10 knots.

2. Operations in the vicinity of thunderstorms shall be avoided.

3. Operations shall cease with visible lightning within five (5) miles of the airport.

F. **STAGING AND LAUNCH**

1. As part of the pre-takeoff checklist, the glider PIC shall review an emergency plan of action to include, but not be limited to, Premature Termination of the Tow (PT3) scenarios and any other pertinent information.

2. The glider PIC has sole responsibility for the final determination of the airworthiness of the glider, integrity of the towrope, and competence of the launch crew.

3. Non-rated pilots in gliders shall conduct solo operations under the direct supervision of an Association CFI-G who shall be present for the preparation and launch of the non-rated members.

4. The glider PIC shall ensure two-way communications with the towplane have been established before each launch.

5. The glider pilot and tow pilot shall conduct a tow-pilot briefing in accordance with FAR 91.309 to include Altitude, Area, Airspeed, Signals, and Emergencies, and discuss/agree upon any planned activities, such as, but not be limited to, boxing of the wake or slack-line training.

6. Atmore Municipal Airport Operations

1. Association glider operations should initiate from no further north than the west taxiway for RW36 launches, and no further south than 1500 ft north of the east taxiway for RW18 launches.
2. When the OSO determines that the pattern allows, a cart shall be used to pull the glider onto the runway. The towplane shall enter the runway close enough to attach the tow rope, but far enough away to avoid affecting the glider and personnel with propwash.
3. The OSO (or wingrunner under the direct supervision of the OSO) shall display the proper tow ring, at which time the PIC shall signal their readiness to hook up to the tow rope.
4. The tow pilot should confirm that the rope has been hooked up, check the glider configuration, and then, at the direction of the OSO/wingrunner—who shall use standard SSA ground signals throughout the launch--take up the slack.
5. Once slack is out of the tow rope, the OSO/wingrunner shall continue to present the “stop” signal to the tow pilot while confirming that the glider is ready for launch (pilots strapped in, canopies closed and locked, tow-out gear removed, spoilers closed). Once confirmed, the OSO/wingrunner shall monitor the PIC for the next step.
6. When ready for launch, the PIC shall present the OSO/wingrunner with a thumb’s-up signal. The OSO/wing runner shall turn a full circle, confirming that the pattern is clear and no hazards are on the runway, and then level the wings. It is imperative to ensure that carts, gliders, and personnel remain behind the wing line of any glider being launched.
7. The tow pilot shall waggle the rudder to signal readiness to launch. The PIC shall waggle the rudder to signal readiness to launch. The OSO/wingrunner shall give the ready-to-launch signal to the towplane. The PIC may also verbally communicate launch readiness over the radio. The tow pilot shall then initiate the launch at their discretion.

G. **AEROTOW**

1. Standard SSA airborne signals apply.

2. High tow is the preferred tow position.

3. Accelerated, slingshot, or soft releases are prohibited.

4. No glider maneuvers on tow shall be conducted below 1500 ft AGL.

5. After clearing the airspace to the left, forward, and right, the glider’s release shall be immediately followed by a climbing right turn upon visual confirmation of tow release. The towplane shall then make an immediate descending left turn.

6. Normal tow direction shall maximize the ability of the glider to return to the field in the event of an early release. To this end, once the towplane has lifted, the towplane may offset the direction of flight up to 30 degrees away from runway heading to provide the glider with an opportunity for a teardrop return and downwind landing.

H. **PATTERN** and **LANDING**

1. Landing checklist and radio calls, to include “gear down and locked,” shall be made prior to entering the landing pattern.

2. Avoid low-energy landings to help prevent tail-boom strikes.

3. Normal patterns shall be flown.

4. All operational launches and recoveries of gliders shall be on paved surface unless PIC determines the use of grass on east or west side of runway is warranted.

5. Upon coming to a stop, the PIC should expeditiously clear the glider from the runway unless an immediate relaunch is desired.

6. If a brief, debrief, or change of crew is required and cannot be accomplished immediately, the glider shall be removed from the hard surface and the launch procedure will be restarted when conditions permit.

7. When staging on the east or west grass: golf carts, gliders, and personnel shall remain at least 10 feet clear of the runway so as to not interfere with any runway, aircraft, or airport operations.

8. The CSA/Skywarrior SOP covers operations at Atmore when Skywarrior is operating their aircraft at the same time that the CSA is operating gliders—to include Skywarrior using a west pattern and the CSA using an east pattern.

I.  **CROSS-COUNTRY OPERATIONS**

1. Members engaging in cross-country operations shall have adequate retrieval options available.

2. Retrieval using the Association towplane shall be at $150/hr of towplane tach time.

3. Aerotow retrieval shall only be accomplished from designated landing facilities; retrieval from agricultural or open fields shall be by trailer.

J. **RADIO** and **TRANSPONDER USAGE**

1. Each aircraft shall have an operable radio prior to launch.

2. Transponders in association aircraft shall be on ALT for all launch, tow, and post- release operations. Gliders shall squawk 0200, and the towplane shall squawk 1200.

3. The glider PIC or tow pilot shall announce on CTAF the positioning of the towplane or glider on the runway for launch. The tow pilot shall announce the start of the takeoff roll. Airborne gliders are encouraged to respond with their relative positions and altitudes prior to an announced glider launch. This also applies to airborne gliders when arriving aircraft announce they are approaching the airport for landing or pattern work or other departing aircraft announce their takeoffs.

4. All aircraft shall announce their entry into the airport traffic pattern on CTAF.

K. **SCHEDULING and MAINTENANCE**

1. Members may schedule association gliders (normally in non-consecutive 1 ½ hour blocks) on the Association’s scheduling site. Introductory flights are scheduled for 1 hour. The scheduled time is the **launch** time. Members shall take appropriate measures to ensure they are ready to launch at their scheduled times. Accommodations for mechanical or unforeseen circumstances shall be made as directed by the OSO.

2. Members shall have Association gliders on the ground at the end of their scheduled times unless otherwise approved by the OSO.

3. All mechanical discrepancies shall be reported to the OSO immediately upon discovery, and an immediate determination of the airworthiness of the aircraft shall be made.

4. Members who assemble privately-owned gliders shall ensure that their Assembly Checklists, Critical Assembly Checklists, and Positive Control Checks are accomplished prior to staging in the launch area.