Ref. no.: FSC.SC014

Date: 06/2022 Pages: 2

British Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association Ltd

8 Merus Court
Meridian Business Park
Leicester
LE19 1RJ

Tel: 0116 289 4316
www.bhpa.co.uk

SAFETY ADVISORY

Issued by Angus Pinkerton - Chairman of the Flying & Safety Committee. 30 June 2022.

All tandem paraglider pilots should read, digest, and take action on the contents of this advisory notice and keep it for future reference until it is superseded or withdrawn by the FSC Chairman. This notice will remain available on the BHPA website.

DUAL PARAGLIDING "HARD" SPREADERS (INCORPORATING RIGID ROD SEPARATING THE PILOT AND PASSENGER).

The FSC is aware of an issue concerning certain "hard" spreaders on dual paragliders, from reports submitted by dual licensed members. During the launch phase, a rotation may occur in the horizontal rigid section of the spreader (the spreader bar), allowing the structural webbing material to twist itself around the bar. This is illustrated on the below left photograph, annotated with an arrow to show the axis of rotation of the spreader bar observed in reported incidents.

The photo on the below right illustrates a correct and untwisted configuration that would be expected in flight.

The spreaders on the photographs are "Hard Hybrid" spreaders manufactured by Advance. The majority of incident reports relate to these spreaders, but the issue is not exclusively with this specific spreader from this manufacturer.

The issue has only been reported to take place in some instances when a reverse inflation is used on hill sites. The FSC is not aware of this issue occurring in tow launches or during forward launches.

Once the rotation has occurred, the combined weight of the pilot and passenger applied to the spreader makes it impossible for the pilot to reverse the rotation whilst in flight. When the load is removed from the spreader on landing, the spreader can be manually untwisted until the rotation is released. It may release itself.

(cont.)

British Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association Ltd

8 Merus Court
Meridian Business Park
Leicester
LE19 1RJ

Tel: 0116 289 4316
www.bhpa.co.uk

The FSC has investigated this issue by conducting a number of dual paraglider launches with Advance Hard Hybrid spreaders. A sample of passenger harnesses were used. On the few times the rotation occurred, it was in strong wind conditions using a traditional reverse launch technique rather than a technique that allows for more progressive inflation of the wing at the edges of the power window (e.g. “Cobra” technique). The ease at which the rotation could be induced was not affected by the type passenger harness, passenger size, or combination of the two.

Action:

All dual pilots who use “hard” type dual spreaders are advised to perform a visual check of the spreaders once the wing is inflated, but before accelerating to become airborne. If a rotation is detected before getting airborne, abort the launch if it is safe to do so, using a suitable method to “kill” the wing.

If the spreader rotation is detected once airborne, do not be distracted by attempting to untwist the rotation. The dual pilot is advised to cut short the flight by safe means and reset the spreader rotation after landing.

If further issues are identified, please report these using the online incident report form, via the BHPA website.