


Irish Aviation Authority The Times Building 11– 12 D'Olier Street Dublin 2, Ireland www.iaa.ie Safety Regulation Division	Údarás Eitlíochta na hÉireann Foirgneamh na hAmanna 11–12 Sráid D'Olier Baile Átha Cliath 2, Éire Rannán na Rialachán Sábháilteachta	No. OAM 11 Revision 00 Date 03.10.17	
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Hang-Gliding and Paragliding in Ireland Advisory Memorandum

1. Introduction

The purpose of this Advisory Memorandum is to promulgate general information to persons intending to fly a ‘hang-glider’ or a ‘paraglider’ in Irish Airspace.

2. References

- S.I. No. 324 of 1996. Irish Aviation Authority (Airworthiness of Aircraft) Order, 1996
- S.I. No. 107 of 2001 Irish Aviation Authority (Nationality and Registration of Aircraft) Order, 2015
- S.I. No. 333 of 2000 Irish Aviation Authority (Personnel Licensing) Order, 2000
- S.I. No. 355 of 2008 Irish Aviation Authority (Aerodromes and Visual Ground Aids) Order, 2008
- S.I. No. 420 of 1999 Irish Aviation Authority (Air Operator Certificates) Order, 1999
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 923/2012 laying down the common rules of the air

3. General Rules

3.1. Registration, Airworthiness & Pilot Licence Requirements

Hang-gliders or paragliders flown in Ireland as private aircraft (i.e. "private aircraft" means an aircraft which is neither a public transport aircraft nor an aerial work aircraft), which have a maximum empty mass of 80 kilograms or less, are exempt from the following requirements:


- Aircraft Registration,
- A Certificate of Airworthiness or a Flight Permit,
- A Pilot Licence.

3.2. Rules of the Air

Hang-gliders and paragliders are not exempt from the rules of the air. It is essential that pilots of hang-gliders and paragliders understand the rules applicable to the airspace where they intend to fly. These rules can be complex and include Air Traffic Control rules for entering controlled airspace and for sharing any airspace with other powered and non-powered aircraft. The Standardised European Rules of the Air ([SERA](#)) are applicable in Irish airspace. These rules include the operation of hang-gliders and paragliders under the definition of ‘Sailplane’ as follows:

‘Sailplane’ means a heavier-than-air aircraft, which is supported in flight by the dynamic reaction of the air against its fixed lifting surfaces, the free flight of which does not depend on an engine, including also hang gliders, paragliders and other comparable craft.

Among other general airspace requirements, these rules include specific sailplane rules for converging, overtaking and aerodrome signage. Additionally, hang-gliding and paragliding clubs normally have rules and protocols for novice pilots.

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3.3. Land Owner Permission

The Irish Aerodromes and Visual Ground Aids Order (2008), requires that any person intending to take-off, in any form of Glider, be able to do so without hazard to persons or property and must have the permission of the owner or occupier of the place of take-off. Generally, the owner or occupier of such places will require the glider pilot to have adequate third-party insurance. More information on insurance requirements for hang-gliding or paragliding is available from the Irish Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association (see: [IHPA Insurance Requirements](#)).

3.4. Other than Private use

The exemptions enjoyed by hang-glider and paraglider operators/pilots from registration, airworthiness and pilot licence requirements are based on these aircraft being operated as private aircraft (e.g. for personal recreational use). Any form of commercial use (e.g. payment for a tandem flight) in these aircraft would invalidate the exemptions and may leave the operator and/or pilot open to prosecution.

For clarity, operators proposing to use a hang-glider or paraglider as a commercial transport or aerial work aircraft may apply to the IAA for aircraft registration, a flight permit and pilot licensing. Additionally, for the issue of an Air Operator Certificate, the requirements of the Irish Aviation Authority (Air Operator Certificates) Order (S.I. No. 420 of 1999) must be satisfied. Operators or Associations wishing to discuss the applicable requirements should contact the IAA at fod@iaa.ie.

3.5. Conclusion

Private flying in a hang-glider or paraglider is a form of recreational aviation that enjoys exemptions from some of the normal requirements for operating an aircraft in Ireland. These exemptions reduce the regulatory burden on participants, however, the IAA notes and endorses the Irish Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association's warnings that "hang gliding and paragliding are forms of aviation, with all of the inherent and potential dangers that are involved in aviation. No form of aviation is without risk. Injuries and death can and do occur in hang gliding and paragliding, even to trained and highly experienced pilots using proper equipment" and "no one should participate in hang gliding or paragliding who does not recognise and wish to personally assume the associated risks".

As with many adventure sports, certain life insurance policies may specifically exclude such activities. The IAA strongly encourages participants to ensure that they have adequate and appropriate personal and third-party insurance to cover any potential risks.

Additionally, any person who intends to engage in hang-gliding or paragliding in Ireland is strongly advised to contact the [Irish Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association](#) and the manufacturer of their equipment for advice about operating limitations, proper maintenance and serviceability, training, and the general rules that must be obeyed.