



Technical and practical recommendations concerning Air Sports Operations during COVID- 19



FAI Medico-Physiological Commission (CIMP)
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1 INTRODUCTION TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FAI-CIMP

The aim of these recommendations is to lower the chance of becoming ill from COVID-19 and to prevent the spread of the virus. These recommendations do not mean that they will exclude further spread of the Corona virus, or that an individual cannot be caught by the virus. Even when strictly applied, there will remain a chance that cross contamination can occur. To exclude any contamination, only strict quarantine is valid.

To take responsibility is the main topic.

In an infected person, the virus is present in body fluids, especially fluids from the nose-throat region. But it can also be excreted in stools or exhaled air. The hands are an important route for spreading the virus.

It is well known that viral particles can remain on surfaces. Depending on the material, even as long as 72 hours.

Effective restrictions to reduce spreading of the virus and preventing illness are:

- Washing hands thoroughly and often with water and soap. If not possible, use antiviral fluids for the hands (alcohol 70%)
- Availability of antiviral fluid at all places where people come together
- Prevent touching the face with the fingers
- Physical distancing, at least 1.5 meter
- No physical distancing only permitted in case of members of the same household
- Sanitizing surfaces that are touched by others

It also stresses that national regulations prevail at all times over FAI recommendations, which are meant to complement existing efforts and to support those countries where no specific air sports documents are in place. In other words, national rules are always the primary guidelines. Therefore, FAI strongly recommends to also stay informed about the latest national instructions.

The considerations and recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO) are important.

For sport events and mass gatherings (contests, meetings) risk assessments and tools are included. The International Olympic Committee has provided information on this subject:

WHO Risk Assessment for Sport Events and Considerations for sports federations/sports event organizers when planning mass gatherings in the context of COVID-19:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance/points-of-entry-and-mass-gatherings>.

This document provides a COVID-19 risk assessment and mitigation checklist for use by host countries and mass gathering organizers. It also includes an operational tool which offers guidance for organizers holding meetings during the COVID-19 outbreak and which should be accompanied by the WHO COVID-19 Generic Risk Assessment Excel file. It should be read in conjunction with WHO's key planning recommendations for Mass Gatherings in the context of the current COVID-19 outbreak.

For all air sports, the guidance of the UK CAA is very useful:

https://publicapps.caa.co.uk/docs/33/CAP1919%20GA_RTS_ADVICE_E2.pdf

<https://publicapps.caa.co.uk/docs/33/CAP1925%20COVID%2019%20Preparing%20to%20return%20o%20flying%20for%20GA%20pilots%20E2.pdf>

For cleaning and sanitizing avionics:

2 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL FLYING ACTIVITIES

- In case of health complaints, even mild, such as a common cold, sneezing, sore throat, cough, fever, shortness of breath, but also abdominal complaints, headache, other “strange” symptoms: stay at home, do not come to the airfield.
- In case of a member of your household having these health complaints: stay at home.
- Transmission of the virus is possible, even when a person has not yet complaints.
- In case of contact with an infected person in the last 14 days: stay at home.
- Take your own food, drinks, protecting materials to the airfield.
- Per aeroclub, a corona-official person can be appointed. Tasks: to coordinate applicable regulations, check compliance, point of contact.

2.2 RECOMMENDATIONS AT THE AIRFIELD

- Physical distancing, do not shake hands
- Strict hand hygiene
- Specific tasks to be performed by one person. After the task is completed, all touched surfaces to be cleaned or sanitized
- Better use personal equipment than common equipment
- Watch each other, make comments in case of non-compliance
- Only perform flying activities if fully “fit-to-fly”.
- For persons at risk (> 70 year, conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, but not limited to these): stay at home

A limitation of the number of persons present at the airfield is highly effective:

- Use time slots
- Make a scheme for participants
- No social activities
- Limited time present at the airfield

Other measures :

- Use doors and windows at the minimum, to avoid contact with surfaces
- Avoid public transport

In case of inability to keep physical distance, mitigation measures may be applied.

THIS DOES NOT RESULT IN THE SAME DEGREE OF PROTECTION!

- Disposable hand gloves, to be removed immediately after use and disposed off into a closed bin
- Face masks
- Safety spectacles

Face masks: non-medical face masks only protect others, to some extent, from droplets spread by coughing, sneezing, exhaling, talking. They do NOT provide protection from receiving the corona virus from other persons, as the virus can be present in aerosols. These are not blocked by non-medical masks.

IMPORTANT ISSUE

Understand WHY measures are implemented. Use your common sense!

3 SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS PER AIR SPORT

3.1 BALLOONING

3.1.1 Preparations

- Sanitization of the edge of the basket before every flight
- Passengers will fill in a declaration of health
- Procedures have to be clear: website, e-mail, video
- Face masks available
- Sanitizing fluids on board
- Number of passengers dependent on possibility for physical distance
- Consider the use of transparent plastic walls between passenger compartments – being produced by several manufacturers.

3.1.2 At launch point

- Physical distancing
- Sufficient number of crew, to prevent passengers getting too close to one another if helping to unpack the balloon
- Instruct application of face masks
- During flight
- At any time physical distancing
- Passengers to keep their face outward while standing in the basket
- During flight: use face masks
- Use sanitizing materials for each touched surface

3.1.3 After flight

- Passengers have to sanitize hands and leave the location of landing as soon as possible
- A sufficient number of crew has to be present to prevent passengers getting too close to one another if helping to pack the balloon
- Physical distancing
- If not necessary, avoid close contact with the owner of the landing area

3.2 HANG GLIDING

3.2.1 Preparations

- Physical distancing
- Watch the wind direction at the airfield, choose an upwind position
- Preferably use own equipment
- Shared equipment: to be sanitized or cleaned before each use. The use of disposable hand gloves is recommended, to be removed immediately after use and disposed off into a closed bin

3.2.2 At launch point

Winch

- One regular winch driver
- Changing of winch driver: to sanitize all touched materials
- Return of cable by one person
- The pilot has to fix the cable himself, if possible
- Only verbal instructions by instructor or other officials
- Physical distancing at any time

Aerotow

- The pilot has to fix the cable himself, if possible
- Return of the dolly by one regular person
- Only verbal instructions by instructor or other officials
- Physical distancing at any time

Soaring

- No special instructions needed

3.3 GENERAL AVIATION/AEROBATICS/MOTORIZED AIRCRAFT/HISTORICAL AVIATION/MICROLIGHT

3.3.1 General

- The use of protection equipment during flight is limited because of flight safety and communication problems. Face masks are only usable when communication with other persons and radiotelephony will not be limited. Visual restriction by protection equipment is not acceptable. During the flight max ventilation has to be provided, no recirculation. Avoid air flows from one to the other persons.

3.3.2 Preparation

- Pilots and passengers have to fill in a health declaration
- If necessary, provide shielding between persons
- Max hand hygiene
- Headsets: no shared headsets. In case of non-compliance: to be sanitized before and after use
- Sanitizing fluids readily available in every hangar and public space
- Instruction and exam flights
- Before the flight: health check and health declaration, by student pilot and instructor
- Use of face masks by all pilots, only if no unacceptable restrictions in flight safety occur
- Use of hand gloves by all pilots, to be removed immediately after use and disposed off into a closed bin
- Flights only to other airfields where adequate services are available
- Instruction and exam flights in SIM
- Before the flight: health check and health declaration, by student pilot and instructor
- If no physical distancing is possible, shielding is acceptable

3.3.3 Passenger flights EASA AIR-OPS (larger groups), while motor is not switched off between flights

- All pilots and passengers: face masks
- Groundcrew: face masks and disposable hand gloves, to be removed immediately after use and disposed off into a closed bin
- No use of headset by passengers, only permitted for the pilot. No shared headsets
- Sanitation of aircraft at every fuelling pause or before, if possible

3.3.4 Passenger flights for smaller groups, while motor is switched off between flights

- All pilots and passengers: face masks
- Groundcrew: face masks and disposable hand gloves, to be removed immediately after use and disposed off into a closed bin
- No use of headset by passengers, only permitted for the pilot. No shared headsets
- Sanitation of the aircraft before and after each flight

3.4 MODEL FLYING

3.4.1 General

- Move all activities and interaction to outdoor, if possible
- Physical distancing at any time, for pilots and visitors
- Distancing between models at the airfield
- Personal protection equipment must be available, like face masks, disposable hand gloves or spectacles. To be removed immediately after use and disposed off into a closed bin
- Max hand hygiene by means of washing hands with water and soap, or sanitizing hand gel

3.4.2 Indoor flying

- Contact the manager of the location
- Align local and own protocols

3.4.3 Instruction flights

- Use only wireless connection between instructor and student pilot
- Use hand gloves during touching/manipulating of equipment by the student pilot. Immediately to be removed after use and disposed off in a closed bin.

3.5 SKYDIVING

National Guidelines will prevail. For further information please contact either your national organisation, your local drop zone or the nearest wind tunnel.

3.6 PARAMOTOR FLYING

3.6.1 Instructions, proficiency checks, exams

- One pilot in the paramotor. Only wireless contact with student pilot
- Proficiency checks only when physical distancing can be guaranteed
- Theoretical exams only when physical distancing can be guaranteed
- Practical exams: identical to proficiency checks

3.6.2 Paramotor centres

- Use preferably own equipment
- In case of shared equipment: to sanitize materials after use, conforming to the guidance of the manufacturer
- Use disposable hand gloves, to be removed immediately after use and disposed off in a closed bin

3.7 PARAPENTE, PARAGLIDING

3.7.1 General

- <https://federation.ffvl.fr/actu/covid19-ffvl> (French)
- <https://federation.ffvl.fr/sites/ffvl.fr/files/Recommandations%20Covid-19%20%28002%29.pdf>
- <https://federation.ffvl.fr/aide-reprise-activites-vol libre-ffvl>
- Physical distancing
- Use preferably own equipment
- Shared equipment: to be sanitized or cleaned after each use, conforming to the guidance of the manufacturer.
- The use of disposable hand gloves is recommended, to be removed immediately after use and disposed off into a closed bin
- Watch the wind direction on the launching point, choose an upwind position.

3.7.2 Winch launching

- One regular winch driver
- Changing of winch driver: to sanitize all touched materials
- Return of cable by one person
- The pilot has to fix the cable himself, if possible
- Only verbal instructions by instructor or other officials
- Physical distancing at any time

3.7.3 Tandem flights

- Tandem masters and passengers use mouth-, nose- and eye-protection
- Tandem masters use new hand gloves at every jump
- Tandem masters and passengers use new disposable hand gloves
- Equipment: to be sanitized or cleaned after each use, conforming to the guidance of the manufacturer.

3.8 GLIDING

3.8.1 General

- <https://members.gliding.co.uk/covid19-restrictions-support-exemptions-and-restarting-gliding-information/>
- Flying activities take place in smaller groups, using time slots and by appointment
- Physical distancing
- Cleaning and sanitizing all equipment, conforming to the guidance for the selected material
- Come alone, preferably with own transport.
- Take own personal materials, food, protection materials, sanitizing fluid, wipes
- In case of using club equipment: cleaning before and after use
- Watch the wind direction on the launching point, choose an upwind position.
- Sufficient distance between gliders, at launch point and at parking area
- If necessary, divide the groups: 1. student pilots with instructors, and 2. private pilots

3.8.2 Flying in two-seater

- Pre-flight briefing outside the glider
- Ventilation during flight: minimum air flow from front seat to rear seat
- Define max. duration of flight
- Depending on the national regulations: use of face masks, disposable hand gloves, spectacles.
- For disposable materials: to be removed immediately after use and disposed off into a closed bin

4 USEFUL LINKS

<https://www.fai.org/news/fai-statement-coronavirus-covid-19-situation?type=node&id=24669>

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

<https://www.iatatravelcentre.com/international-travel-document-news/1580226297.htm>

<https://flightsafety.org/toolkits-resources/covid-19-safety-roadmap-and-punch-lists/>

5 FOR FURTHER QUESTIONS

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