



THE GLIDING FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA INC

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AIRCRAFT PRESERVATION DURING COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

3 April 2020

To whom it may concern,

Almost all gliding clubs in Australia have been shut down due to federal, state and community restrictions from the Covid-19 pandemic. The remaining few are operating under severe restrictions with appropriate risk mitigations in place. These shut downs happened suddenly and with very little warning or preparation. As a result the majority of the aircraft across the country have been inadequately prepared for what is expected to be an extended duration of inactivity.

Inadequate storage preparation and poor storage conditions are likely to result in damage to the aircraft that may take significant time and cost to return to an airworthy condition when the Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

In order to ensure adequate storage preparation of the aircraft, access to the airfield or the location of the aircraft is required. Transport of the aircraft to a location with better storage conditions is also considered to be of potentially significant benefit. The access to the aircraft and / or transport of the aircraft must be conducted within the federal, state and community restrictions that apply to that state.

The greatest risks to the airframe during storage will be corrosion / water damage, insect nesting and rodent ingress. Many aircraft maintenance manuals will have a chapter detailing actions for storage of the aircraft. These actions should be followed. Aircraft with engines should follow the guidance in the aircraft maintenance manual for engine preservation.

Where there is not a specific chapter in the aircraft maintenance manual, the Airworthiness Department recommends the following generic guidelines:

1. Remove all soft furnishings from the sailplane and store in a suitable dry place away from the sailplane. Consider removing harnesses if rodents are known to be a problem.
2. Tape up all fuselage, hatch and wing openings. Tape up around nose and belly releases. Note do not cover up any fuselage or wing drainage holes. Use a contrasting coloured tape.
3. Tape over the static, pitot and total energy openings, also using a contrasting tape.
4. For aircraft in humid conditions, disconnect all static line plumbing from the installed instruments and plug or cap the static lines. Note dependent on the storage environment it is acceptable to remove the instruments or panel and store in another location.

5. Batteries are to be removed and placed on charge and / or stored separately to the sailplane.
6. If the aircraft is derigged, all exposed bare steel fittings eg lift pins and drag pins, to have corrosion prevention applied by covering the surface with grease.
7. Apply rodent bait around the storage area. Consider applying rodent bait in the sailplane as well. Ensure that a note is made of where the bait is in the aircraft.
8. Ensure the storage location is weather tight. Repair the trailer for leaks as required if the aircraft is stored in the trailer. If stored in the trailer, consider sealing the front door ensure that the trailer is tilted down at the rear so that any water that does enter drains away.
9. In the current maintenance release: Record that the intent of the GFA preservation maintenance has been performed. Make an entry in the maintenance to be performed section that a return to service inspection is required before next flight.

The return to service is the opposite of the above along with a functional check of the instruments to ensure that they are connected correctly, a visual inspection for corrosion of bare steel fittings, and a visual inspection for insect nesting and any rodent damage.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anthony Smith', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Anthony Smith
Chair Airworthiness Department
Gliding Federation of Australia
3 April 2020