

Look after the fabric of your glider

A modern paraglider is an incredibly high performance aircraft for its size and weight. This little miracle is possible thanks to the current fabrics. These high tech fabrics are the biggest part of a glider: a 27 sqm canopy is made of approximately 90 sqm of fabric... This sophisticated, high performance material needs care: if you take some precautions when handling your canopy, you will significantly increase the life expectancy of your glider...



Handle your glider carefully

After flying, lay your canopy neatly. Above all, fix the reinforcements of the leading edge up, stacking them one against the other. You will avoid permanent creases in the fabric which will affect the aerodynamic performance of the leading edge.



Don't let insects get trapped in your canopy

Bees flying in the canopy when you pack it away can try and gnaw their way out - making holes in the process. In addition, insect excrement will stain the fabric: it's easy to avoid, get rid of them before folding your canopy. Besides, contrary to popular opinion, insects do not prefer particular colours.



Don't step on the canopy

Walking or standing on the canopy, wet or dry, is particularly hard and noisy. As owner of the canopy, it might seem obvious to you, but don't forget spectators on take-off areas, especially children. Don't hesitate to point out to them the fragility of the fabric.



No detergents, solvents or abrasives

Don't ever clean your canopy with solvents or abrasives. Solvents like White Spirit attack both the coating and the fibres of the fabric. The canopy will become porous and lose its strength.



Cleaning with water and mild soap

If a stain on the fibres of your canopy really bothers you, you can try to gently remove it with soft water, a non-abrasive sponge and a very mild soap like Ecover or Millairelle. In any case, thoroughly rinse the washed part and dry it in an airy, shadowed place.



Don't put your canopy in the washing machine

Basically, never put your canopy in a washing machine, even without detergent. The fabric will be seriously damaged by the mechanical action. Don't plunge your canopy into a pool: the chlorine will attack the fabric. If you must, finish your glider after a sea landing in salt water for example, clean it with a garden hose. However, repeated rinsing accelerates aging.



Never store your glider near chemicals

Never store your glider near chemical substances like fuel. Petrol drops, for example, dissolve the fabric and can thus badly damage your canopy. In your car too, put your glider bag as far away as you can from a petrol can or oil drum.



Don't squash your glider excessively

Although your glider is delivered very lightly packed, avoid squashing it too hard when you stuff it away after use. Even if it is tempting to use waiting for favourable conditions to take-off, avoid, as far as possible, sitting on your bag.



Don't drag the fabric over the ground

As a rule, when assembling a glider, the manufacturers put the coated side of the fabric facing inside the wing section. This protects the coating, which is sensitive to mechanical abrasion. Nevertheless, avoid dragging the canopy over the ground, especially in stony areas or where there are thorn bushes.



Never fly a wet canopy

When your canopy is soaked after a sea landing for example, it is imperative that you don't fly until it is entirely dry. The stresses the fabric is under whilst flying might cause the wet fabric to lose its shape and make the glider unserviceable. If you get caught in the rain, avoid sudden manoeuvres which load the glider. Don't fly slowly (risk of stall) and land as soon as possible.



Don't leave a wet glider in the bag

Sometimes, you have to pack your canopy away humid or even wet. When you get home, take it out of the bag and dry it in a clean and airy place. If you don't have the space, place your canopy in a "mushroom" shape and periodically change the bag exposed to the air. If you don't do this there is a risk of mould growth and the glider fabric will degenerate very quickly. The worst atmosphere is humidity combined with heat!



Let it breathe

Even if your glider was completely dry after the last flight of the season, it needs air. For winter storage, we advise you to open the bag and to store it in an airy, fresh, shadowed and above all dry place. If you have enough room, take the canopy out of its bag and leave it "mushroomed". Make sure it doesn't pose a risk to household pets, and is not accessible to vermin.



Avoid heat

The fabric of the glider is sensitive to excessive heat. Especially when it is combined with humidity, heat speeds the hydrolysis process up: both fibres and coating suffer. Never leave the glider bag in the back of a car or in a car parked in the sun. Do not store your glider near a radiator or any other heating appliance. Remember, heat combined with humidity can cause serious degradation of the fabric.



Don't "sunbathe" your glider

Although modern fabrics are now more resistant to sunlight, especially UV, light is still an important aging factor. First, vibrant colours. Then the fibres and the coating deteriorate.



Avoid repeatedly overloading your glider

Your glider is capable of withstanding the loads it is subjected to in maximum line control. Even from extreme aerobically manoeuvres like the SAI or tumbling don't constitute a risk to the structure of the glider. However, repeated overloading speeds up the ageing process - zero profile have to regularly change their gliders.



Use the professionals

For the safety checks on your canopy or a second-hand glider, use a professional technician. Without adequate tools, it is very difficult to assess the ageing of a canopy. Failing, for example, might not affect the mechanical properties of a modern fabric. In most cases, even if the colours have faded, porosity and strength reserves remain within required specifications.

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