



## **Suggested Equipment for New Pilots**

Once you have finished your course, you will probably be in the market for equipment. Here is a list of the gear we recommend, starting from the most important.

### **1. Canopy (Glider)**

Simple you say, but not all canopies are created equal. Many new pilots feel that they will outgrow a training glider too quickly and feel that an intermediate glider would be a better choice for a first glider.

Paragliders are classified by the DHV (German Hang Gliding Federation) in to a series of grades depending on their stability, reaction to turbulence, and the degree of pilot input required to get them flying again in the advent of a major collapse.

Gliders are graded as DHV1, 1-2, 2, 2-3 and 3. There are some competition gliders that are not certified, but only load tested (we like to know that the glider isn't going to fall apart if we do a big spiral dive).

The classifications are as follows:

- 1** Paragliders with simple and very forgiving flying characteristics.
- 1-2** Paragliders with good-natured flying characteristics.
- 2** Paragliders with demanding flying characteristics and potentially dynamic reactions to turbulence and pilot errors. Recommended for regularly flying pilots.
- 2-3** Paragliders with very demanding flying characteristics and potentially violent reactions to turbulence and pilot errors. Recommended for experienced and regularly flying pilots.
- 3** Paragliders with very demanding flying characteristics and potentially very violent reactions to turbulence and pilot errors, little scope for pilot errors. For expert pilots only.

The wisest choice for the new pilot is the DHV 1 glider. In paragliding, your fastest progress will be by growing out of, rather than growing into, your equipment. At times even the most experienced pilot will wish they were in a more stable wing. The air can be very intimidating and unpredictable, and if you have limited experience, you are more likely to be physiologically affected by a bad experience. This will result in regression rather than progression. Flying a stable glider in rough air will have a smile on your face rather than fear in your eyes.

Paragliding Queensland is the sole Australian importer and distributor of Gin Gliders. In our 13 years of experience, we feel that Gin Gliders offer the best combination of quality, performance, security, price and all round value available in paragliding today.

The canopy with which you start your training will be the Gin Bolero Plus. This glider offers unparalleled security while giving performance capable of rewarding cross county flights. The Bolero has been flown in excess of 120km cross-country, is fantastic for ridge soaring and tow launching, is super easy to inflate, and has forgiving ground handling characteristics. It's the all round fun machine!

Price for a new "state of art" DHV 1 canopy is about \$3800

## 2. Harness

Now here the choice becomes daunting!

There are harnesses, harnesses and harnesses. The type of harness you purchase as your first harness, will depend on the following:

- The types of flying you hope to pursue.
- Your body size and shape.
- If you are right handed or left-handed (reserve parachute deployment side).
- Your budget.

Some of the options include:

**Recreational harnesses** - For those pilots wanting to fly recreational cross-country flights, ridge soaring and don't feel the need for a full on, layback flying style.

**Light and ultra lightweight harnesses** - Harnesses designed for low volume, lightweight. These harnesses are ideal for pilots planning to do a lot of travelling with their glider or pilots who regularly fly from sites where a long walk to launch is required. The harnesses usually have less storage capacity/durability in order to save weight. The lighter harnesses are usually made from lighter material which has the potential to be less durable. The weight reduction is also achieved through less storage capacity. Personal (back) protection can also be compromised with light harnesses (however some of the new generation of light harnesses have excellent back protection).

**Competition harnesses** - Harnesses designed for pilots who want to achieve a minimum drag profile to eek out the best possible glide ratio for long cross-country flights. These harnesses have the pilot in a very flat "supine" position and as such are not very suitable for entry-level pilots. These harnesses are also at the top of the price range for harnesses.

Price for a top quality harness range from \$800-\$1200

## 3. Reserve Parachute

Hardly ever used (but neither is the airbag in your car). Reserve parachutes come in various sizes depending on your all up flying weight. Most reserves are round "non steerable" canopies. Some manufacturers market steerable reserves,

however the pilot's ability to steer the reserve is severely limited by the need to stabilise the main canopy while under descent. (Very few pilots will ever have use their reserve, but it would be no time to figure you should have bought one when you are plummeting towards the ground following a mid-air collision).

Reserves are usually mounted in a specially designed reserve container built in to your harness. Some lightweight harnesses require the use of a separate reserve container attached to the front of the harness, which must be purchased separately.

Price for a reserve parachute range from \$770 - \$850

#### **4. Helmet**

Helmets come in two main styles:

**Open face** - This type of helmet will offer the best peripheral vision, wind feel on your face, and wind noise in your ears. This allows you to really feel the air. The down side is less facial and cranial protection in the advent of an accident, and your face will be colder during extended high altitude flights.

**Full face** - Better protection comes at the expense of less feel of the air.

\* A note on helmets. Choose wisely. Nothing will make a flight more distracting than the subtle but grating pain of an ill-fitting helmet.

Price for helmets range from \$195 to \$420

#### **5. Flying Boots**

Footwear designed specifically for paragliding. They may look like normal hiking boots, but stiffening material built into the side of the boots result in very laterally rigid boots to minimise twisted/broken ankles. The boots are still very flexible in fore/aft movement allowing you to walk easily up or down mountains.

Ankle injuries are a very real risk in paragliding. Suffer even a mild ankle twist whilst wearing running/sports shoes, and you will appreciate the benefits of a good pair of paragliding boots.

Price range from \$330 - \$420

#### **6. Radio**

For those pilots intending to do the majority of their flying in Australia, a UHF radio is almost indispensable. Useful not only for organising a retrieve after that long cross-country flight, but they allow other pilots to relay safety information which is particularly important during your early flying career.

Radios come in three main types:

**Small pocket low powered** - Ideal for use on the training hill or while you are within 5km of launch. These radios are low powered and relatively inexpensive.

**Larger high-powered hand held** - The radio of choice for paragliding and hang gliding cross-country pilots. These units usually offer two transmission power

settings. The low setting for normal flying conditions, and the high setting to achieve reception when you have landed. These units are much more expensive, but you won't be left waiting when you land in an out of the way location.

**PTT: Press to Talk:** An small, remote, radio activation switch placed on your finger allowing you to communicate with your ground crew/other pilots without moving your hands from the gliders controls.

**Mobile (car) base station** - Fixed high power units which will allow your driver to easily communicate with you whilst you are in the air. These units are usually less expensive than the high-powered hand held radios.

Price for top quality communication equipment range from \$102 to \$470

## **7. Flight Instrument: Variometer (usually called a "Vario")**

The "vario" is an indispensable part of any cross-country pilot's kit. The instrument comprises a variometer (a super sensitive audio/visual climb and descent indicator), an altimeter, and usually some other features such as a stop watch, clock and air temperature gauge. Whilst it is not mandatory to fly with a "vario", CASA regulations require the carriage of an altimeter for all flights over 100m in altitude.

Price for quality Swiss paragliding instrument range from \$550 all the up to \$1900

## **8. Flying Suit**

It may feel hot when you are standing around on launch, but try spending 4 hours at 2,000m+ and you'll soon appreciate the comfort and protection offered by a good quality flying suit. A paragliding specific flying suit will offer ample storage pockets, most of which are easily accessible during flight, and long zippers for good ventilation while you wait on launch.

Price around \$370

## **9. Gloves**

Well designed flying gloves make not only for a comfortable flight but will also offer protection from nasty line burns (if you have to try and stop an errant canopy in strong winds while on the ground).

Price from \$70

Please note that price and specifications are subject to change without notice.