

Safety Briefing



Photograph courtesy of Colin McInnes

The thermal soaring protocol aims to describe known good practice based on many decades of hard-learned experience. It does not replace the need to comply with the Air Navigation Order

Joining a Thermal

1. Gliders already established in a thermal have the right of way
2. All pilots shall circle in the same direction as any glider(s) already established in the area of lift
3. If there are gliders thermalling in opposite directions, the joining gliders shall turn in the same direction as the nearest glider (least vertical separation)
4. The entry to the turn should be planned to retain continual visual contact with all other aircraft at or near the planned entry height, and to ensure no glider already turning will be required to manoeuvre to avoid the joining glider
5. If possible, join the same circular track as the other glider, or if that is not practical, join a circle wider than that of the thermalling glider and only move onto that glider's circle when you can achieve safe separation

Sharing a Thermal

6. Maintain visual contact with established gliders and position your glider so established pilots can see your glider. **Lookout** is always paramount. Never allow your monitoring of in-cockpit equipment to interfere with your lookout.
7. When at a similar level to another glider, never turn inside or point your glider at or ahead of the other glider unless you can guarantee safe separation and maintain visual contact
8. If you lose visual contact with a nearby glider or if you cannot guarantee safe separation, leave the thermal
9. Look out for other aircraft joining or converging in height

Leaving a Thermal

10. Look outside the turn and behind before straightening up.
11. Do not manoeuvre sharply unless clear of all other aircraft.

Thermal Soaring Protocol