

From Your Instructor

By Riaan Struwig



Next Step, Advanced PPG flying

What is the next step of PPG flying after completing your basic license?

Over the last few years of training we have told our students: the moment you get your basic pilots license you must keep in mind it is a BASIC license.

A lot of basic pilots fall in this trap. After only a few flights they will start to do extreme wing overs, pitching of the wing, trying to do feet drag etc.

I have been flying for almost 10 years and in a very short time managed to be part of the SA team and competing in international competitions. I soon found out it is not as easy as was advertised. I was trained by one of the best instructors in the world, Tony Gibson. Tony at the time showed the world how to fly the Slalom with a speed bar. I also had the privilege to learn and fly with top pilots in the world like Paval from CZ, Keith from Cape Town.

I always tell the pilots at the field, be prepared, know what to expect and anticipate what is going to happen. The best way of doing this is to practice, get advance training techniques etc.

The danger of pushing the limits

One of the biggest problems is low level flying with either wing stall or wing collapse. Almost every pilot does this with trims closed and flying on the brakes. At this point your wing is flying just above stall speed and the slightest sharp turn etc can cause a serious crash. Flying below 5 meters you need to ensure you have energy in the wing to keep it flying. To be able to recover the wing in case of deflation. That said, it will not always be possible to



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recover the wing but at least the changes of having a collapse with pressure in the wing is also minimized.



Tony going Around Pylon

While flying low with trims closed and your engine dies, you might not have the opportunity to react, but with trims slightly open, not flying on the brakes you will have the opportunity to convert the energy in the wing to height and make a safe emergency landing and in most cases without any damage.

What to Do!

One of the best ways will be to do an advanced PPG training course. During the course we will train you on what to expect, what to do and what is the expected outcome. By knowing what to do and what to expect you will minimize the risk of damage to you and your equipment. Also at the same time it will give you the confidence to do low flying and to enjoy what it is all about.

During these type of courses you will learn more about what your wing can do and what not to do...

“FLY High, Fly Safe!”



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What to look out for

The biggest killers in our sport are power lines and water. Everyone started because he saw someone flying low over a nice open piece of land or low over a coastal line or open piece of water. Dragging his feet in the short grass or even on the water. **BE AWARE, Power lines and Water KILLS.**

When you fly, always be aware what is around you, make sure you know where power lines are. 90% of the time if you see a road or fence the chances are there will be power or phone lines. Also it happened to me, I was flying in the same area for almost 5 years, at least 4 times a week. Knowing every rock and tree in the valley. One day a group of us were flying and someone said on the radio, to watch out for new power lines that were installed the day before. He saw it the day before and we did not. I was heading straight in to it, looking at the ground and not in front of me.

At the same time rather fly with slightly open trims, if need be you can convert the energy in the wing easily into height, or if you have to do a sharp turn preventing the wing from stalling or spinning.

When flying over water, dragging feet etc., fly with a water rescue system. Agama from Nirvana is one proven system.



Also when flying low over the water, keep your speed up, open your trims and maintain height with engine control and minimal brake input. Again if the engine dies you can convert the energy of the wing into lift, and land safely on land.

If you do foot drags or low flying below 3 meters sit on the front part of your seat or even get out of the harness. You will have better feel and



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height control and in case of emergency be ready to do a safe landing. Again I have seen firsthand pilots sitting and if something goes wrong there is no time to get out and run. In most cases it costed them at least a cage and propeller and some nice bruises.

Summary:

- Watch out for power or phone lines
- Fly safely over water, always make sure you can reach dry land without the motor
- If you do have to fly over water or enjoy foot dragging, fly with a water rescue system
- Open your trims at least 1/3 to create energy in your wing during low flying
- If you do fly low get out of your seat.

Never fly slow close to the ground, unless directly into the wind and low enough to flare and land if necessary

PPG Advance course

This course is not only meant for future competitions or extreme sport pilots, but all who feel it is necessary to take the next step, to learn more than just the basics. The course will also give you the opportunity if you meet the min requirements to complete your sport license grade. .

Typical three to four day course:

- Improving take-off skills by applying different techniques
- Improving pilot skills on 3 axis (pitching, wing overs, etc.)
- Improving active flying with different trimmer settings
- Big ears and descending techniques (360's, B-Lines, etc.)
- Improving low level flying, adding turns to it
- Improving overall security in flight
- Initiation to slalom (switching speed to turn, turn to speed)
- Advanced low level flying techniques
- Open book Sport license Exam\
- Min of 5 flights of 30min each under instruction



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