



THE GLIDING FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA

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AIRWORTHINESS ALERT

& request for information 2004-1

SZD-50-3 PUCHACZ

A report has been received from Poland where last week-end a Puchacz suffered a complete failure of the front control column. At this stage the precise details of the failure or the outcome of the incident are not known but it is believed to be a fatigue related failure. It is known that the aircraft had only done approx 1500 hours and the Poles have grounded their Puchacz fleet pending an inspection of the front control column. Prudence suggests we should do likewise.

Therefore the following actions are required for all SZD-50-3 Puchacz gliders in Australia .

1. Before further flight, inspect the aircraft for cracks in the area shown on the attached drawing. Be imaginative, as we are not sure yet which part actually failed.
2. Ground the aircraft, pending rectification, if cracks are found.
3. Notify results of inspections to GFA without delay (whether cracks found or not).
4. Inspection to be performed by or under the supervision of a person holding a current GFA Airworthiness Authority endorsed for Inspection for issue of a Maintenance Release or higher.

The attached drawing and disassembly / assembly instructions will help carry out the inspection.

Please report the findings directly to the GFA Airworthiness office: Fax (03) 9379-5519, Phone (03) 9379-7411 or e-mail stoa@gfa.org.au

Further information will be forwarded to you as it comes to hand.

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Senior Technical Officer, Airworthiness

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Procedure for examining front control column of Puchacz for fatigue cracks:

1. Tie rear control column back or have someone handy to hold control column back.
2. Remove access panel and boot around front column exposing the control column fittings.
3. Lightly clamp an engineers clamp or similar around fork leaving access for a ring spanner or socket to undo the two nuts securing the column and parts.
4. Using a Texta pen or similar, mark the top bolt head & adjacent fork hole so that you will know which bolt was at the top and which was at the bottom. Also mark a line across one side only of the top of the fork and filler pieces so that you can reassemble the parts in the original order.
5. Undo both nuts and tap out bolts with a soft drift.
6. Remove parts and examine control column in area around bolt holes and where it emerges from the aluminium parts just removed. Also check the front and rear halves of the fork. Use a magnifying glass of at least 3X power, preferably 5X. Dye penetrant method may also be used. (shield the bearings when spraying the fork halves!)
7. If any cracks are found the aircraft is to be withdrawn from service until replacement parts have been fitted. If no cracks are found the aircraft may be returned to service.
8. Replace parts, taking care to assemble in the original order, dress any imperfections before refitting as necessary.
9. The findings of this inspection are to be recorded in the aircraft logbook and also reported to the GFA whether cracks were found or not. Ring the Airworthiness office on (03) 9379-7411, Fax (03)9379-5519 or e-mail stoa@gfa.org.au

POTENTIAL CRACK SITES

