

Understanding SPOT



SPOT is a device using GPS technology to communicate messages to home base about the position and state of the cross country task being flown. It can communicate pilot's Lat and Long position by SMS text messages to mobile phones and messages to email.

Message types

SPOT has three different messages it is able to send. Each message is tailor made by the owner of each SPOT.

Help:

This message is to let the club know that the pilot has outlanded and all is well. The message will contain the pilots name and possibly the glider rego as well as their position (lat and long co-ordinates) of where they outlanded. The message will continue to be sent every five minutes or so until the pilot turns off the SPOT because the device has no knowledge that the message has been successfully received.

Ops Normal:

This message is to let the club know that everything is OK and everything is Ops Normal. This does NOT mean that the pilot has outlanded. The message should contain the pilots name and possibly the glider rego as well as their position (lat and long co-ordinates). You should receive only one message from this button press. These messages are usually sent later in the day to give the receiver the knowledge of Ops Normal or possibly when a pilot is turning a turn point on a long task.

Emergency:

This message will go straight to the Spot manufacture who will then relay it to the Australian emergency services. The message should contain the pilots name and possibly the glider rego as well that fact they are flying gliders and that they will try to monitor the emergency frequency (121.5). It should also have contact details of the club or family.

What to do with Spot information in an outlanding

When receiving a "Help" message informing of an outlanding, the basic information is already given with the pilots name possibly the glider rego and their position but more information can be obtained if necessary. By looking on the SAR register some SPOT owners have their own spot shared page. By getting on the internet and typing in their page address a map can be obtained. This map is both a road map as well as a Google Earth map and can show a lot of useful information. Another way to access the maps page is go to the club spot email at DDSC.spot@gmail.com (Username DDSC.spot and password DDSCzd50). Some SPOT owners have set their devices to send an email to this address. Just click on the link to get forwarded to the map page.