



THE GLIDING FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.

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AIRWORTHINESS ALERT 2009-3.

Nimbus 4DM & Solo powered self launching gliders

Yesterday the operator of a SOLO powered Nimbus 4DM reported a severe fuel leak which occurred in flight. Upon landing fuel was seen to be leaking from the drain hole under the engine bay and there was significant fuel streaking along the bottom of the fuselage. Fortunately, the leak did not result in a fire. This aircraft has had 57 launches for a total of 10.47 engine hours since new in 2005.



The line is protected by a metal braid, but this gives little protection from heat and investigation revealed severe heat degradation of the fuel line underneath the damaged area of the braid. This occurred where the fuel supply line passes between the starter motor and engine crankcase, and is nearly impossible to detect without disassembly. It is not known at this stage whether SOLO engines other than the 2 625 series are affected.

If you have a SOLO powered self launching glider it is strongly suggested that you check the routing of the fuel lines and if the lines go between the starter motor and the crankcase you may well have a serious problem about to develop.

Before further flight:- check the lines under pressure (engine STOPPED, electric pumps ON). Check for abrasion of the braid; some disassembly will be needed to do this thoroughly. **If any abrasion of the braid is evident the line is suspect and it should be replaced immediately.**

The above actions should be performed by, or under the supervision of, a person holding a current GFA Section 2 Airworthiness Authority endorsed for replacement of components on Two Stroke or Four Stroke engines or higher authorisation.

It is highly likely that an AD will be issued as a result of this occurrence, once all the relevant information is to hand. Please report any adverse findings directly to the GFA Airworthiness office by email via the GFA website, or phone (03) 9303-7805 or fax (03) 9303-7960. I will be in the office on my normal working days over the Christmas / New Year period.



John G Viney,
Senior Technical Officer, Airworthiness

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