

Airprox occurred in Class G airspace, where pilots are required to look out and avoid each other. The Board noted that the Bonanza pilot was required by the Rules of the Air to avoid the DR400 and Glider combination. They also observed that the Bonanza pilot had reported that he saw the other aircraft and assessed that there was no risk of collision, but that he took action anyway. Board members noted his assessment and emphasised that powered aircraft pilots should give a wide berth to gliders being towed because they usually have little ability to manoeuvre and the glider might be released at any point after which a tug is then likely to make swift manoeuvres to return to the glider site and collect the next glider.

Notwithstanding the Bonanza pilot's assessment of the risk, the Board noted that both the DR400 and the glider pilot had a different view; the glider pilot was about to emergency release from the tug but did not have time. The Board therefore agreed that the cause of the incident was that the Bonanza pilot had flown in to conflict with the DR400 tug and glider whilst in close proximity to a promulgated and active gliding site. When discussing the degree of risk, the Board thought there was potential for this occurrence to be classified as an A because it appeared that safety margins had been considerably reduced, and the tug and glider pilots had seen the Bonanza close aboard at a very late stage indeed. Notwithstanding, members recognised that the Bonanza pilot had seen the tug and glider combination, albeit perhaps quite late, and had taken effective action to prevent the situation worsening. The Bonanza pilot had assessed a minimum separation as 200m, and the tug/glider crews as 50-100ft; as a result, it was agreed that the degree of risk was Category B in reflection of the proximity of the incident to the tug and glider combination, which had very restricted ability to manoeuvre.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: The Bonanza pilot flew into conflict with the DR400 tug and glider whilst in close proximity to a promulgated and active gliding site.

Degree of Risk: B.

ERC Score⁴:

⁴ Although the Event Risk Classification (ERC) trial had been formally terminated for future development at the time of the Board, for data continuity and consistency purposes, Director UKAB and the UKAB Secretariat provided a shadow assessment of ERC.