SOUTH AFRICAN HANG GLIDING AND PARAGLIDING ASSOCIATION
Incorporating Powered Paragliding & Hang Gliding

26 June 2026

SAHPA Safety Advisory: Parakites – Appropriate Use and Limitations

Dear SAHPA Members and Parakite Pilots,

Advisory on the Use of Parakites in South African Flying Conditions

Parakites (also referred to as kite-paragliders or hybrid wings, such as models like the Flare Moustache/Bandit, Flow Mullet, Niviuk Jester, and similar designs) represent an exciting and emerging category in free flight. These wings blend elements of paragliding and kitesurfing, featuring reflex airfoils, adjustable angle-of-attack via risers, high collapse resistance, and excellent performance in strong, laminar winds.

Key Design Purpose
Parakites are specifically designed for coastal and dynamic soaring environments, where consistent, strong winds provide lift along ridges, cliffs, dunes, or beaches. They excel in high-wind, smooth-air conditions, offering superior speed, agility, energy retention for dives and swoops, and the ability to soar in winds that would ground conventional paragliders.

Important Limitations and Safety Concerns
Parakites are not intended for typical inland or high-Alpine flying that involves thermic activity or turbulent air. Their behaviour in thermic, gusty, or turbulent conditions is not well understood or predictable, as these wings have not undergone the same rigorous certification testing (e.g., EN or AFNOR standards) as traditional paragliders. There are currently no specific regulations or formal testing criteria established for parakites in South Africa or internationally, meaning their performance envelope in rough air remains largely unquantified.

- Avoid launching or flying parakites from sites where thermic or turbulent air is likely or present.
- Do not use parakites for thermal XC (cross-country) flying, ridge soaring in variable/thermic conditions, or any scenarios involving significant turbulence.
- As a precautionary guideline, parakites should not be launched from sites exceeding approximately 60 m AGL (above ground level) unless the conditions are confirmed to be smooth and laminar (e.g., pure coastal dynamic soaring with no thermal influence, and no terrain induced

turbulence). Higher launches increase exposure to potential turbulence, where the wing's response is unknown and could lead to unpredictable handling or collapses.

Pilots transitioning to parakites should prioritize dedicated training, ground handling practice, and progressive experience in suitable conditions only. Overconfidence due to their collapse resistance in smooth air can lead to pushing limits inappropriately.

SAHPA continues to monitor developments in this category and will update guidance as more data, manufacturer recommendations, or regulatory clarity emerges. In the interim, we urge all members to exercise extreme caution, respect the intended use envelope, and prioritize safety above performance.

If you have questions or wish to discuss parakite use at specific sites, please contact the SAHPA office or your regional safety officer.

Fly safe and stay within your limits.

Best regards,
SAHPA Safety Committee