Normally the final approach area must be avoided. In this case the pilot was in contact with the control tower and had permission to do

After Takeoff

When leaving the airport it is best to stay well below the traffic patterns, probably 400' AGL or less would be good (of course always keep a safe landing option open). If overflying a runway is absolutely necessary, the best place to do so is over the center at 400' AGL. There is less likelihood an airplane will be flying there.

If climbout near the airport is necessary, it would be better to climb near the center of the runway and get about 2000' AGL before heading out. This will keep you in tight until high enough to avoid the traffic pattern from above. Be aware that some pilots will fly in 500' above traffic pattern elevation to look at the airport.

Be Seen

If you see an airplane that you might suspect does not see you, the best bet is to turn. Not only will the motion make you more visible, but the changing aspect on the PPG wing will help as well.

Be Heard

Aviation radios can improve awareness to the PPG pilot. If possible, it is a good idea to carry one in such a manner as to be able to at least receive. The frequency to use is published on the sectional chart but will also be available from the airport manager. It will typically be 122.7, 122.8, 122.9 (which is standard for airports without published frequencies), 123.5 or something along those lines.

Keep any talk to a minium but be listening for other traffic. When you're ready to go (announce "Powered Paraglider launch from (your location) and will be x-bound" (use whatever your actual flight direction will be such as "South bound" or "Southeast Bound" as appropriate).

Above all: be polite!

Flightpath

500 to 900 feet

Levels off in approximately 5 nm in approach configuration
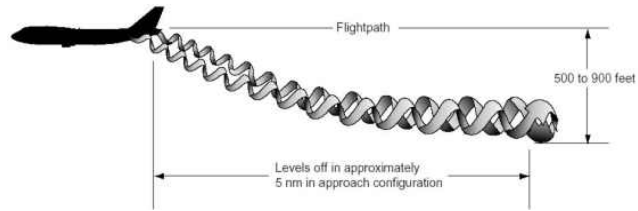
Waking Up

Operating from airports means flying in closer proximity to aircraft and their wake turbulence. This very strong phenomenon creates a deadly double column of air that trails the aircraft's wing tips. It settles about 500 FPM and can linger for several minutes after the airplane passes.

The wake begins as soon as the airplane lifts off and continues until just after the airplane lands. It also drifts with the wind. It can be dangerous for up to 2 minutes.

The danger of flying a PPG into an airplane's wake cannot be underestimated. The same is true of PPC's which create a powerful wake owing to their slow speed.

Another one to avoid is the area above a hot air balloon. When they "vent," which they do by releasing hot air, it can get very turbulent above.
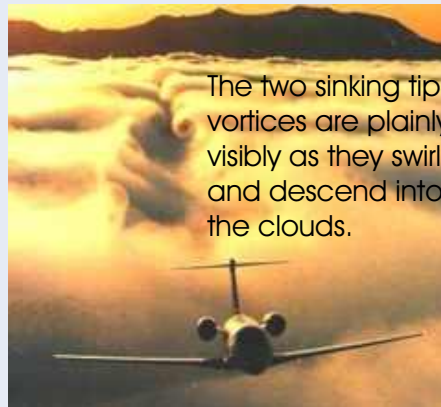
The two sinking tip vortices are plainly visibly as they swirl and descend into the clouds.

Airport Operations

For Paramotor Pilots

A guide to mixing safely with general aviation aircraft and other users of uncontrolled airports

PPG

Powered Paragliders (PPG or Paramotors) are extremely unique in their capabilities and can easily operate from general aviation airports with little or no impact on operations. Being highly maneuverable, they take little room to launch and can quickly exit the area. Portability allows them to launch in areas well away from aircraft operations.

Above all, paramotor pilots must be respectful. Beyond complying with the FAR's and local rules, the pilot must not annoy people, create a hazard or even have the appearance of such.

If planning regular operations out of an airport it is best to contact the airport manager and find out the best places to operate. Explain the capabilities and that you will operate so as to avoid the established patterns and anywhere else he would like you to. This will also avail yourself of local requirements, noise sensitive areas and any other requests.
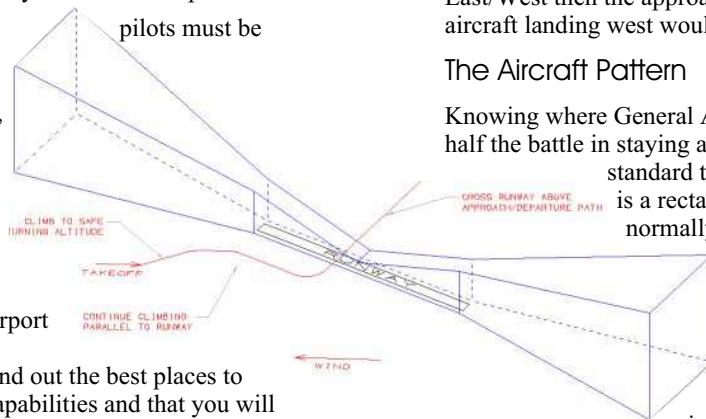
About Runways

Runways are numbered according to the magnetic direction in which the aircraft would be landing on them. North is 0 or 360, East is 090, South is 180 and West is 270. So if the runway was aligned East/West then the approach end of the runway for aircraft landing west would be 27.
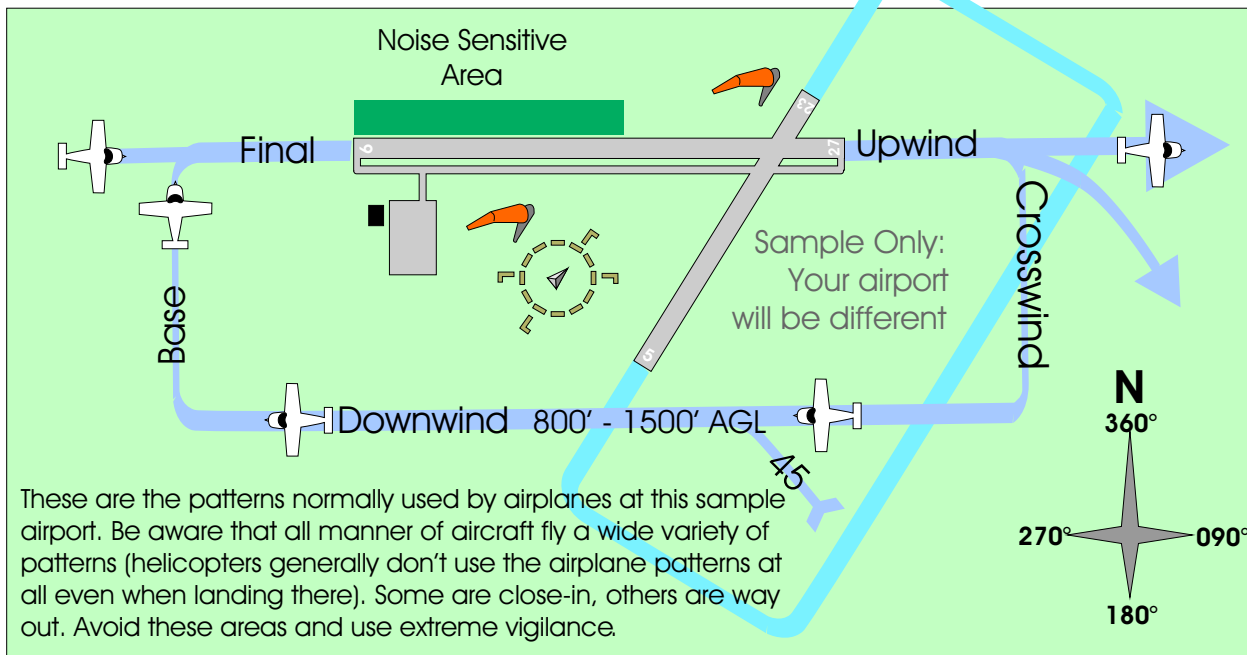
The Aircraft Pattern

Knowing where General Aviation (GA) traffic flies is half the battle in staying away from those areas. The standard traffic pattern for all runways is a rectangle where all turns are normally made to the left until pointed down the final approach. In the diagram below, Runway 27 uses a standard left pattern. Runway 9 however uses a right pattern. Sometimes airport operators want certain runways to use a right pattern instead of the standard left version - usually for noise abatement to keep the traffic away from a certain area. At some airports this is indicated by the "segmented circle" with little "L"s oriented to the runways they depict. If present, this circle usually surrounds a wind indicator. The L represents the turn from base to final where the short portion is the base leg. It can then be quickly determined whether or not a left pattern or right pattern is appropriate for that runway. Normal pattern altitude varies from 600' Above Ground Level (AGL) to 1500' AGL depending on aircraft type. The size of the pattern varies greatly too by speed of the aircraft and desires of its pilot. Turbine powered aircraft may fly downwind leg up to two miles away from the runway while slower aircraft may fly it only a quarter mile away.

Airport Status

It is important to know what the status of the airport is - if anything is closed, what special operations may be going on and any other unique situations. If convenient, ask the airport manager if there is anything you should be aware of. But frequently our early departures require another way and calling flight service is the next best thing. Their number is 800-992-7433 (800WxBrief). Tell them your name, that you will be flying an ultralight at airport such-and-such and that you would like the notams.

Runways In Use

Most of the time airplane pilots use the runway favoring the wind but not always. Sometimes they'll do a long, straight-in final approach to a different runway even if it has a tailwind. PPGers must be on the lookout for this.

How to Mesh

Now that you have the airport information and know where the patterns are it is fairly easy to stay out of the way. And indeed the most important thing is PPGers can do is avoid being in places where aircraft are likely to be. Fortunately this is pretty easy.

The chosen launch area will ideally be away from the runways and departure/arrival corridors. Initial climbout and arrival should be planned to avoid the runway, it's extended centerline, and any buildings.

Be vigilant not to overfly any noise sensitive areas: doing so will bring heat to the airport management and if that is caused by the paramotor pilot, your

Diagram labels

CROSS RUNWAY ABOVE APPROACH/DEPARTURE PATH

CLIMB TO SAFE TURNING ALTITUDE

TAKEOFF

CONTINUE CLIMBING PARALLEL TO RUNWAY

WIND

RUNWAY

Pattern diagram

Noise Sensitive Area

Final

Base

Downwind 800' - 1500' AGL

Upwind

Crosswind

45

Sample Only: Your airport will be different

N 360°

270°   090°

180°

These are the patterns normally used by airplanes at this sample airport. Be aware that all manner of aircraft fly a wide variety of patterns (helicopters generally don't use the airplane patterns at all even when landing there). Some are close-in, others are way out. Avoid these areas and use extreme vigilance.