# Indian National Paragliding Pilot Rating System

PARAGLIDING ASSOCIATION OF INDIA
www.pgaoi.org

## Document Revision History

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# Introduction

This document describes the Paragliding proficiency or Skill levels of the Indian National Paragliding Rating System. These levels are considered equivalent to major systems around the world and follow the FAI Safepro Para system.

| PAI | BHPA | USHPA | APPI | IPPI |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Introduction (P1) | | | Discover | IPPI1 |
| Student Pilot (P2) | Elementary Pilot award (EP) | Beginner Pilot | Explorer | IPPI2 |
| Novice Pilot (P3) | Club Pilot (Novice) | Novice Pilot | Pilot | IPPI3 |
| Intermediate Pilot (P4) | Pilot (P) | Intermediate Pilot | Progress | IPPI4 |
| Advanced Pilot (P5) | Advanced Pilot (AP) | Advanced Pilot, Master Pilot | Advanced | IPPI5 |
| Sports Tandem Pilot (P6) | Tandem | Tandem Instructor | Non-Commercial Tandem | IPPI6 |
| Commercial Tandem Pilot | | | Pro Tandem | |
| Assistant Instructor | | | Assistant Instructor | |
| Instructor | | | Instructor | |

# Paraglider Pilots Levels

## 1. Introduction to Paragliding (P1):

The main purpose of this non-certificate course is to bring more people into the sport by letting them experience the joys of free flying without any major time or financial commitment. This course can be counted towards the tasks needed to be completed for the "Student" course. In case there is a gap of more than 4 weeks between this course and the "Student" course, refresher days will be added by the schools as they seem fit. Training exercises must be maintained in a Logbook and signed off by an Instructor.

This course introduces students to:

### i) Theory Knowledge

- Paraglider as an aircraft, how the glider flies, how it is controlled in the air, etc.
- Introduction to different parts of the paraglider, weight range, etc.
- Basics of airflow in which a new student can fly safely

### ii) Ground handling

- Glider layout on the ground
- Forward Inflation with A risers
- Raising wing and control (including aborting take-off): On flat ground and on slope

### iii) Task List for Introduction level

- Equipment routines: Assembly, unfolding wing on ground, moving it when needed, daily check, adjustment, disassembly
- Packing and unpacking the glider
- Clearing the lines
- Strapping into harness safety checks
- Preflight check: Connections, conditions, visualizing run or flight, clear area
- Take-off: Sight forward, acceleration and trajectory control, gradual loading of glider
- Flight control: Correct airspeed and directional control, smooth corrections
- Landing: Directly into wind, sight forward, ready to run, using glider as a brake
- Proper PLF emergency landing

## 2. Student Pilot (P2):

The course at this level is intended to create responsible, well aware and safe student pilots. Some of the tasks listed in this course can be considered completed if they were completed in the "Introduction to Paragliding" course within a 4 week period. Instructors will add refresher days if the gap between courses is longer than that. The instructor shall be convinced that the student is able to take care of his own and others safety, while altitude gliding within the recommendations given.

Training exercises must be maintained in a Logbook and signed off by an Instructor.

### i) Minimum Requirement

- Introduction Course where available but not mandatory

### ii) Theory content

- How the wing flies, how controls work, under what conditions the wing stops to fly, wind over surface, concepts of lee and rotor and basic concepts of high and low pressure and how wind flows.
- Nomenclature of paragliding equipment. Adjusting the harness for comfort and safety. Introduction to different parts of paraglider, weight range, etc.
- Active Piloting and safe control range for student level.
- Ridge soaring/ Thermal flying traffic rules.

### iii) Ground handling

- Glider layout on the ground with respect to the wind
- Forward Inflation with A risers
- Demonstrating good understanding of controlling the inflation and keeping the glider above head depending on site and wind conditions

### iv) Task List

- Planning: Insight, evaluations and decisions, flight plan, axis, drift, height, landmarks
- Pre-flight check
- Mental state and stress level awareness, techniques to lower stress

- Take-off: Canopy raising and control, stop-line/decision, acceleration, liftoff, clearing terrain, transition to sitting position
- Shallow turns: Visual check, gentle to medium bank, drift correction
- Approach: Setting relative to terrain and wind, types of approach, hands up, straight final, overcoming gradient with speed
- Landing: Aiming towards a preset area, hands up and braking
- After landing: Checking traffic, leaving landing for next pilots
- Daily inspection, preparation, and pre-flight checks (unassisted)
- Pilot should have done minimum 6 flights and at least two flights without instructor inputs

## 3. Novice Pilot (P3):

The course at this level is intended to create independent soaring pilots. Pilots having completed NOVICE Level level can fly independently. The Instructor shall be convinced that the student can take care of his own and others' safety within applicable rules and regulations, recommendations and code of good practice, while operating alone. It is recommended that they fly a minimum of 10 hours in the company of experienced pilots.

Active flying is maintaining the normal flying mode in turbulent air. It includes keeping the angle of attack within the limits, managing pitch and roll movements, preventing and recovering from collapses, tucks and stalls, and quick descent techniques.

Training exercises must be maintained in a Logbook and signed off by an Instructor.

### i) Minimum Requirement

- STUDENT PILOT Level
- 6 Flights (with 2 flights without instructor inputs)

### ii) Theory Content

- Flight theory: angle of attack, stall, drag and their relationship to speed, polar curve and speed to fly. Air interaction with the wing during deflations and instabilities like stall and spin.
- Take-off: Stop-line awareness and decision before accelerating for take-off
- Pitch and roll control: Simulation and dampening swings (stabilizing the glider), speed bar

- Big ears: Collapsing wingtips, holding them, recovering them; big ears and weight shift turns; big ears plus speed system; other descending techniques
- Asymmetric collapse: Like a one side big ear or slightly bigger if possible – inducing, holding, recovery
- Big ears, effect on angle of attack explained .
- Speed bar use and effect on angle of attack and stability.
- Meteorology theory: deeper discussion into lee side and turbulence around thermals, cloud types, fronts and associated weather. Also clarify that clouds can be pure convection clouds too, not just from fronts. Lapse rate and energy in over-developing clouds. Inversion explained in terms of lapse rate.
- Airspace rules, Ridge soaring/ Thermal flying traffic rules.

**iii) Task List**

- Demonstrate soaring with outside weight shift with drift control
- Speed control: Minimum sink speed, best glide angle including with lift/sink or wind.
- Turns: Ordinary speed and at minimum sink, coordinated, no sign of stall
- Introduction to controlled 360 with bank angle control
- Use of speed bar with big ears
- Roll and pitch, induced and corrected. 360 turns, short of spiral dive
- In mountains where over-development is common. B line stall.
- In dynamic conditions if available top and slope landing.
- Precision approach and landing: Safe and inside an area decided by the instructor, figure 8 and standard aircraft patterns

**4. Intermediate Pilot (P4):**

Soaring involves using updraughts to extend the flight duration, be it flying on a ridge facing wind or in thermals. At this stage, the pilot should be able to take care of his own and others' safety while flying during displays, demonstrations, and local/friendly competitions. A pilot needs to understand air space distribution, air laws and air maps to qualify, as the next level is XC and this knowledge is required for the next step.
A pilot needs to maintain a physical log book which is signed by the school CFI or instructor or a pilot with higher rating, He/She can also maintain the online flight log on XContest.

**i) Minimum Requirement**

- NOVICE PILOT Level

- 50 hours of flying (which includes 10 hours in thermic conditions)
- Flights from at least 3 different sites
- SIV course recommended if appropriate site and instructor are available
- Must pass the theory examination conducted by PAI

**ii) Task List**

- Take-off in strong wind, reverse position.
- Manoeuvring in lift band: Figure 8 pattern, drift and gradient corrections, no sign of stall, manoeuvring according to terrain and traffic, keeping a good lookout
- Ridge soaring: Best lift zone, best speed along the ridge, managing priorities, maintaining easy reach of landing options .
- 360° turns: From minimum sink to steep bank, correcting drift
- Thermal soaring: Finding and following thermal cores, choosing exit direction
- Landing in wind: Positioning according to wind strength, traffic control, ground handling.

**5. Advanced Pilot (P5) :**

The Advanced pilot is fully autonomous and shows good flying experience. He is able to take care of his own and others' safety while flying. He is able to operate his paraglider in a wide range of terrains and conditions. At this level, pilots should exhibit the ability to remain calm and give the right inputs (note to instructors: if the pilot is nervous and not in control of their wing, the level cannot be considered completed). XC Distances may be re-quantified according to the standard of difficulty at each site. Pilots should exhibit a clear understanding of the aerodynamics of the wing in all conditions. They should also have a clear understanding of when conditions are getting unsuitable to fly safely.

**i) Minimum Requirement**

- INTERMEDIATE PILOT Level
- 100 flying hours, 5 different sites
- Advance SIV course
- Minimum qualifying distance in a single XC: Big mountain terrain 60km eg. Bir-Himachal, Flatland or small mountain terrain 35 km eg. Panchgani
- Must pass the theory examination conducted by PAI

**ii) Task List**

- Choosing the best launch with regard to the weather analysis

- Taking off with less than ideal conditions, managing traffic
- Ease to turn both directions in a thermal, alone or in traffic
- Sustaining flight in very weak conditions while maintaining a good safety margin (close to terrain, with limited landing fields, in glider traffic, etc.)
- Thermalling in strong wind while maintaining safety with drift and elusive lift
- Using the MacCready theory, choosing thermal exit time and speed to fly
- Thermalling in gaggles: This practice should be acquired gradually, with first one, then more pilots at the learner's level
- Managing:
    - Accelerated asymmetric collapse
    - Amplified pitch with dampening, with front collapse, amplified roll
    - Autorotation, stall
- Choosing the best landing field while in flight and setting up a precision approach for a short field with possible barriers
- Landing with other gliders at the same time

## 6. Sports Tandem Pilot (P6):

This rating shows that the Pilot has mastered the specific skills needed to fly a tandem Paraglider. The Sports Tandem Rating enables a qualified pilot to fly a tandem paraglider with another licensed pilot or a trained student for **non-commercial, recreational, or training purposes only**. Pilots should attend a "Tandem Clinic" to learn about legal obligations, soft skills, safety focus, etc.

### i) Minimum Requirement

- INTERMEDIATE PILOT Level
- The pilot should have flown in 5 different sites with at least 100 hours and 100 flights after completing his NOVICE PILOT level.
- The pilot should have completed a first aid training course from a reputed organization.
- Tandem Clinic organized by PAI
- Must have done SIV course if not already done during intermediate pilot level
- Must pass the theory examination conducted by PAI

### ii) Task List

- The pilot should display thoroughness in securing themselves and the passenger to the tandem glider. The pilot should demonstrate rigorous and verbal safety checks before actual takeoff.
- The pilot should ensure securing helmets for both the passenger and self and reserve installation during every flight.

- The pilot should demonstrate the ability to brief the passenger regarding the flying conditions, and explain the flight plan to them. The pilots must also practice and demonstrate the appropriate soft skills needed to put anxious passengers at ease.
- The pilot should demonstrate controlled inflation and takeoff in different wind conditions.
- The pilot should demonstrate the ability to be alert regarding the passenger's mental state. Soft skills must also be practiced to relax anxious passengers mid-flight and make small talk to improve the flying experience.
- The pilot should be able to adapt his landing style to different wind conditions keeping the safety of the passenger in mind.
- The pilot should understand different glider trim settings and the right settings for suitable conditions.
- The pilot should have good knowledge regarding this glider trim check and recognize when it needs periodic health checks.

**7. Commercial Tandem Pilot Level :**

This rating certifies that the pilot has **mastered the specialized skills required to fly a tandem paraglider safely**. A Commercial Tandem Pilot is authorized to fly with non-pilots as passengers and is permitted to conduct flights on a paid, professional basis. The rating emphasizes advanced piloting ability, passenger safety, communication, and emergency management, ensuring safe and enjoyable tandem experiences.

**i) Minimum Requirement:**

- Must hold a Sports Tandem pilot rating for at least one year or one full flying season
- Minimum of 100 logged tandem flights
- Recommendation from a PAI-certified Instructor/CFI
- Must follow PAI's Tandem Pilot Guidelines and demonstrate understanding of legal responsibilities and soft skills for passenger management (Refer to guidelines for tandem pilots on PAI website)
- Must submit an undertaking confirming adherence to all PAI guidelines and disciplinary procedures
- Must pass the theory examination conducted by PAI

**ii) Evaluation tasks:**

- Attend a pro-workshop conducted by any PAI member school within 12 months of application (Annual Schedule of workshop will be published on PAI website)

- Demonstrate proper harnessing of both pilot and passenger, including verbal safety checks before launch
- Explain flying conditions and flight plan to the evaluator and the passenger
- Show calmness and confidence in handling anxious passengers
- Inflate and control a tandem wing unassisted in moderate wind conditions
- Demonstrate strong-wind ground handling without taking off
- Show safe take-off techniques in moderate to weak winds
- Land safely under varying conditions, prioritizing passenger safety
- Demonstrate knowledge of glider trim checks and glider health assessment
- Maintain an airworthiness record and flight logbook.

**8. Assistant Instructor (Paragliding):**

The Assistant Instructor Rating is the **first step toward becoming a paragliding** instructor. At this stage, pilots work under the supervision of certified instructors, gaining practical exposure to teaching responsibilities. Their role includes supporting ground handling, launch preparation, flight supervision, and post-flight debriefing. They also learn the PAI education system, covering syllabus structure, safety protocols, and evaluation methods. Assistant Instructors gradually develop communication and teaching skills while building confidence in identifying risks and guiding students safely. Though not authorized to instruct independently, this rating provides a structured pathway to full Instructor certification, emphasizing competence, discipline, and professionalism.

**i) Minimum Requirement:**

- Must hold a PAI Advanced Pilot rating
- Minimum age: 18 years
- Must have passed SSC (or equivalent) and be able to read and understand English
- Must have trained under a qualified instructor from a recognized school, typically covering at least two student batches or 20 days
- Must work under a qualified instructor for a minimum of two years or flying seasons
- Must be evaluated and certified by a second CFI
- Must demonstrate ability to support student pilots through structured programs
- Must show sound knowledge in gear maintenance, flight mechanics, weather forecasting, airspace regulations, and student assessment
- Must pass the theory examination conducted by PAI

**ii) Assessment Areas**

- Conduct basic theory sessions (wind dynamics, weather, equipment limitations)
- Guide take-offs and landings, and handle unexpected trainee behavior

- Maintain flight safety margins while coaching students
- Conduct effective briefing and debriefing sessions
- Prepare reports in case of incidents or accidents
- Demonstrate appropriate first aid in simulated accident scenarios
- Inspect and maintain equipment airworthiness
- Maintain equipment and training records
- Submit an undertaking committing to compliance with PAI's regulations and disciplinary policies
- (Optional) Submit a course syllabus; retention recommended for instructor's credentials.

## 9. Instructor (Paragliding):

At this level, a paragliding pilot is recognized as a qualified Instructor and may begin imparting paragliding education either by working with an established school or by setting up and running their own training school. An Instructor has demonstrated thorough knowledge of both the theoretical and practical aspects of paragliding, and is capable of Delivering structured instruction, Providing real-time guidance via radio, Handling emergency situations, Developing training systems and Mentoring new pilots.
This rating recognizes not only a pilot's personal flying ability but also their **competence in teaching and safety management**. An Instructor serves as both a role model and mentor, helping to shape the next generation of pilots while upholding the highest standards of safety and professionalism.

### i) Minimum Requirement:

- Must be a certified Assistant Instructor with verified experience training students under supervision for a period of 1 year
- Must have recommendation by CFI
- Must have strong theoretical and practical teaching capabilities, including course design and student mentoring
- Must continuously upgrade personal skills, teaching methods, and curriculum content
- Must pass the theory examination conducted by PAI

### ii) Assessment Areas

- Attend a pro-workshop organized by a PAI member school
- Deliver clear and effective theory lessons
- Use examples and visual aids to simplify complex topics
- Maintain comprehensive student training records
- Issue PAI memberships and skill ratings to students

- Maintain airworthiness logs and flight records
- Submit an undertaking confirming compliance with the PAI Technical Manual and disciplinary protocols
- (Optional) Submit a comprehensive training syllabus
- Understand and adhere to PAI-affiliated school guidelines in order to obtain CFI certification