

CARE AND USE OF PARACHUTES

Aim: To learn how to care for and use a parachute correctly.

Intro:

Most clubs have parachutes available for use when flying their gliders and the majority of private owners have their own parachutes. Parachutes are a potential life saving device that needs to be kept in good condition to ensure it will operate satisfactorily should it be required in an emergency.

Rules on Wearing Parachutes:

The MOAP specifies the times that wearing a parachute is mandatory. These include:

- When carrying out aerobatics
- When flying in any competition

Most clubs encourage the wearing of parachutes on all flights.

Types of Parachutes:

There are a variety of styles of parachute packs and parachutes within. All are designed to save your life if used but they may not have a lot of other features seen on those types designed and used for sport parachuting / skydiving. All will have an adjustable strap and harness system that allows you to strap the parachute on securely...(and not necessarily as comfortable as we may like!) and a deployment or D ring.

Additional features include:

- steering fittings on one or more of the main risers
- quick release fittings on the straps
- quick release fittings on the risers that allow you to release or collapse the parachute in certain conditions
- a static line and connector

DI of Parachute:

It is important to give the parachute a thorough DI before use each day, and an abbreviated check before each flight to ensure its serviceability has not changed with previous use.

Fitting and Wearing a Parachute:

It is extremely important that a parachute is correctly fitted and adjusted when worn. Your instructor will show you how to prepare the parachute for donning, then how to fit and adjust it correctly. This is done before getting in to the glider. Do it with sufficient clearance from the glider so any loose straps and metal buckles do not strike the glider. Several gliders have suffered damage from not thinking about this.

Once donned, be aware of the added bulk when getting into the cockpit. Be careful not to snag / catch any part of the parachute as you get in and get comfortable. Parachute straps and fittings have been known to get caught on parts of the canopy or controls (brake, flap gear levers) and either damage the parachute or inadvertently activate a control.

When strapping in, ensure the seat harness and straps are external to the parachute harness and comfortably tightened.

Using the parachute:

The most likely reason you will have to use the parachute is if the glider can not be controlled sufficiently to allow a surviveable "landing".

Making the decision to jump may be a matter of split second timing. Every second counts with regard to the time it takes to successfully bale out, clear the glider, fully deploy the chute and prepare for your landing. The



first step is making the decision... and lets be honest here... it's a biggy! But if you've gotta go...GO as it is all about saving yourself.

- Jettison the canopy
- Undo your seat harness
- Pull legs up and adopt crouching position on seat or whatever you can do to enable climbing / rolling / diving over the side, preferably toward the upper wing
- Look / locate the D ring and pull to full arms length as you fall clear of the glider
- Check it has fully deployed... YIPPEE...thank God!!!
- Now look at where you are going... whats your landing site like?
- Prepare to "arrive", get everything together starting from your feet up ... ankles, knees, (which means your legs are slightly bent to absorb the impact) chin on chest, arms bent with hands up on the risers and elbows tucked in so you protect your head
- Brief yourself on what to do once on the ground; how to release the harness or risers to stop being dragged.

Once safely on the ground...relax and let your heart slow down! Check for injuries, drag the chute in and use it to protect yourself / bandage / location for searchers. Celebrate once safely home... buy a lotto ticket!!

Do's :

- treat the parachute with great care...it may save your life one day
- store in a dry place, in the bag designed for them
- keep it out of sunlight as much as possible to prevent damage from UV
- pick up with lifting handles if provided, or the whole "container"
- ensure the straps are as tight as possible when worn
- stow excess strapping securely so it can not tangle in anything

and Don't's:

- use as a wing weight on a wingtip
- lift by the D ring or risers
- get water, grease or other contaminant on any part of the parachute
- accept a poorly packed chute as it can become painful to sit on / against in flight
- ever undo any parachute straps in flight
- undo straps too close to the glider as you can strike the glider with the metal fittings

Tips:

Many skydiving operators are willing to offer training and a jump for around \$200. This training is invaluable as it reduces the stress and adrenalin rush in the emergency situation. Consider taking a course... it is fun and an investment in your safety.

It is wise to regularly review how you would bale out of your glider if required. A few minutes doing this will save precious seconds when it counts. Try to always get out of the glider with the parachute on so you are thoroughly familiar with doing this.

Need To Know:

- How to DI and care for the parachute.
- How to correctly don, wear and use a parachute.

Further Reading:

- GNZ MOAP. Page 2-7-1. Stipulates the requirements for wearing a parachute
- Club Rules May contain guidance on use of parachutes
- QGP Syllabus NonNormal Situations: Baleout / use of parachute: more detail on handling this situation