



Ask Allen

A master rigger answers your questions about parachutes.

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Q: *Why do you keep reminding me to protect my parachute from contamination when I ship it?*

A: See photo #1! In the past week I've received two parachutes that could have been destroyed in transit. In both cases, the boxes were damaged by water. One box turned to mush, exposing the red carry bag. Just because the sun is shining when you send your parachute doesn't mean it won't be raining during some part of its journey. Winter is upon us and you need to take extra care to protect your parachute during shipment.



The only reason the parachute in photo #1 wasn't damaged is because the owner sent it in a carry bag made from Cordura. This is a very strong material and is pretty much waterproof. The second parachute arrived in a similarly water-damaged box, but was not protected by a carry bag. I had to hang this parachute up for two days to properly air and dry it. Fortunately, neither parachute was damaged. If they had been exposed to something other than water, the outcome could have been worse.

In addition to the water damage, this same box (see photo #2) was coming apart at its seam. Most shipping boxes have one corner that is glued together. Over time the glue dries out and fails. Not only was this box on its last legs, but the water weakened this area, and it came apart. Use tape liberally and don't forget this weak spot.

This is your expensive cushion. If you don't have a carry bag, think about purchasing one. At the very least, put it in a plastic garbage bag to protect it. Maybe do both. Also make sure you have your address with the parachute in case the box and parachute get separated.

Q: *I'm often asked, "What does your shop look like?"*

A: Usually a mess... only kidding. Those of you who've been to my shop know I keep my tools shadow boxed, and the rest of my shop is usually pretty neat and orderly. I allow no one to place anything on my packing table that could contaminate a parachute. After each

repack, I count the tools I use to pack your parachute and make sure they are back in their proper place (see shadow box photo). I want to ensure I haven't misplaced one in your parachute. After all, it's expensive to replace tools.

As you enter my shop and go up the stairs, you'll notice several photos on the wall. I call this my "Wall of Flame". Some of the photos are of pilots standing next to their aircraft after a successful bailout. As you get to the top of my steps, you see the "Smiley Face" and my shop motto. Next is my office area. One photo actually shows me packing a parachute. The others show the various sewing machines needed to maintain your equipment properly. I also allow customers to send me photos of their aircraft for my customer's gallery wall. It's much nicer than wallpaper.

I would like to wish everyone a wonderful Holiday Season and a Happy New Year. As a resolution for next year, how about joining me and keeping alive the great work that Vicki Cruse accomplished. She was a tiny lady and may have worn small shoes, but it'll take very large ones to fill her position. She was passionate about "Sport Aerobatics" magazine. One thing you could help with is to contribute your questions and suggestions to the people who put all this together. I know you have some great questions and ideas out there, so come forward with them or contribute an article yourself. We need quality material to produce this quality magazine. Happy Holidays. 🇺🇸



1.) Allen packing a parachute.

2.) The shadow box used to keep track of tools.

3.) The "rogue's gallery."

4.) Part of the sewing area.