



Allen Silver

Ask Allen

A master rigger answers your questions about parachutes.

By Allen Silver, IAC 431160

Q: Do I need to keep all my packing/maintenance records for my parachute?

A: Most definitely keep them. Those pieces of paper are an important record of who assembles, packs, and maintains your parachute, and when it was done. They are a chronological record of the maintenance you've had done to your parachute.

Think of them as you would the logbooks you keep on your aircraft. They show the history of your aircraft. Not only do they show routine maintenance, but compliance with factory service bulletins, airworthiness directives (ADs), and any other repairs that have been done to keep your aircraft flying.

The same applies to your expensive cushion (parachute). The parachute records may not be fancy hard-bound logbooks, but they are just as important, especially if you decide to sell your parachute, or you want to make sure you've complied with a service bulletin or AD.

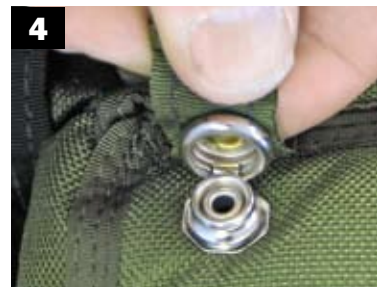
Years ago it used to be a common practice (so I've heard) amongst some riggers to toss out the competitor's packing records that often had the competitor's name or phone number on it. This way when it came time to repack, you could only find the most recent name and number. I'm glad to say that most riggers now understand the importance of the packing data cards.

If you have two, three, or more of these logs stuffed into the parachute's pocket, you may want to remove the oldest ones and keep them in a safe place. Remember, do not toss them out. Like your aircraft logbooks, these records should be available if needed.

Q: I have pull-the-dot snaps on a cushion that attaches to my seatpack. I've pulled and tugged and can't seem to get the cushion off. Is there a secret to getting them on and off?

A: Some parachute components use pull-the-dot snaps to hold things like cushions from constantly popping off all the time. They appear to be a normal round snap (see photo 1), but like childproof (or pilotproof) medicine bottles, they can be impossible to unsnap if you don't know the secret. Calling "Big Bubba" to help you force them open is not allowed. I've had to replace several after they've come in all beat up and battered from people trying and failing to get them to come off. Some people have even come to me complaining that they're broken; then I show them the secret to releasing the snap. Here's the secret (see photo 2): Read the top of the cap. It says, "Pull the dot."

You'll notice a dot (actually a little dimple in the cap). To remove, **pull (or lift) the side with the dot**, and it should easily unsnap. That was the easy part. Now, to snap it back on, look on the inside of the cap, and you'll see a flat edge (see photo 3). When you snap it back on, the flat edge **must** go on first (see photo 4). Use about a 45-degree angle, and then roll the other side down.



Q: Why do I still receive parachutes sent to me in boxes full of loose plastic foam peanuts?

A: This is actually a question from me! The answer is because some of you haven't been reading my earlier columns. It's worth repeating, because hardly a week goes by that I don't receive a chute covered with this annoying stuff. It is also a safety issue, because it can get into and jam/clog the rip cord cable housing, possibly making a very hard or impossible pull. Plus, they stick to nylon due to static electricity, making it very difficult to remove. If you feel you must use foam peanuts, put them in a separate bag that you can seal, so nothing sneaks out.

While you're busy closing your shipping box, don't forget to use tape on the bottom of the box also. Every week I receive at least one box with very little tape holding the bottom closed. If it comes open, not only will you lose your parachute, but you'll lose all those peanuts, too!

Take care, and keep the questions coming. 📧