



ALLEN SILVER
COLUMNS / ASK ALLEN

Webinar Questions

I'LL OPEN WITH A QUESTION FOR YOU.

How many of you saw my webinar on January 19? Two months before giving my online presentation I'd never heard of the word webinar. I must thank the EAA and IAC for setting this up, and a personal thanks goes to Lorrie Penner for planting the seed. Charlie, Trish and Jennifer, thank you for walking me through the process.

If you missed my presentation, it and many others are available by going to www.EAA.org/webinar and following the easy steps to listen to the many free presentations on the site.

There were so many great questions that came up during my presentation that I was not able to answer them all during the time allotted. Listed below are a few.

Q What about the cable on my headset? Will it interfere with me exiting my aircraft during an emergency?

A: I wouldn't spend the rest of your life trying to unplug it, if that's the only thing stopping you from bailing out. I recently had a customer practicing his exit (on the ground), and his headset, which had a chin strap, jerked him back toward the aircraft when he reached the end of the cord. If you bailed out, your weight should not leave you dangling by the side of the aircraft. They're not that strong. However, if you're worrying about that, you might check into a weak link that some companies provide that leaves the majority of the comm cord in the aircraft. They break free with about

15 pounds of pressure. It could be a little more or less, but you get the idea. The one thing you might look into is how your comm cord plugs into your aircraft. If you bail out, is it a pretty straight pull to release it or will more than a 90-degree bend be put in the cord, at the plug? If yes and this is a concern of yours, you might try repositioning the plug for a straighter pull.

Q My chute is rated at 188 pounds gross weight. What should I do? I weigh over that before I put on my parachute or other equipment.

A: You should be wearing a parachute suitable for your gross weight. That means with all your equipment on. I'll use 188 pounds for this example. I've had several customers tell me they weigh only 170 pound naked. The average parachute weighs in at around 15-18 pounds. I suppose if they flew naked that would work. Somehow, in my mind, that does not present a pretty picture, or a desirable solution. Even though most emergency parachutes on the market are tested to 1.2 times what they are placarded at doesn't mean you should push your luck. Some are tested to greater standards, but the figure 1.2 is good for the majority of pilot rigs out there. Could you imagine surviving a bailout and walking up to someone's door wrapped only in your parachute.

Q Should I make a practice jump with my chute since I wear it all the time?

A: A practice jump at your local sky diving center is not necessary, but can be a lot of fun and will possibly lessen the chance of you hesitating or delaying your egress during an actual emergency. You will not be able to use your own parachute, though. When making an intentional jump you must wear two parachutes on a dual harness. Your parachute does not have a backup and is not on a harness equipped to accept a second parachute. This is why you treat your parachute rigger with tender loving care. Also, I don't know of any drop zone that uses round parachutes anymore. Don't confuse a round parachute (like 99 percent of you have) with a rectangular one. That's like saying apples and oranges are the same thing. Every drop zone that I know of has switched to ram-air parachutes many many years ago.

However, losing a wing, having a mid-air collision, or fire will speed up your decision-making. Trust me on this. If you have to bail out because something catastrophic has happened to your aircraft, you'll do everything you can to get out of your aircraft as quickly as you can. What you can do is something I've been preaching over and over year after year. Three simple words. *Practice, practice, practice* before and after each flight will probably reduce your egress time by as much as 50 percent or more. Emergency egress, of your aircraft, can only become second nature if you practice your emergency procedures over and over again. If you have to stop and think what to do while plummeting to earth, it may be too late.