



ALLEN SILVER
COLUMNS / ASK ALLEN

What if . . . ?

HERE I AM ON MY FAVORITE airline where bags fly free writing this column. I survived another Sun 'n Fun. I did not miss the tornadoes this year. However, humor is alive and well within the SNF crew. Our exhibit building had a sign on the outside door that said, "This building was tested to 110 mph winds March 2011." I know because I was in it.

My bailout seminar was well-attended. I want to thank those who attended and the IAC members for inviting me. If you missed my seminar at Sun 'n Fun, you can go to www.EAA.org/webinar and sign up for my bailout seminar or one of the many other great seminars. They're free, and you do not have to be a member of EAA or IAC. You can also join either or both online, if you so desire, and then you don't have to keep borrowing or stealing someone else's magazine.

In a previous column I asked you to consider what would happen if you had to bail out during a flight and to consider what would happen if the center of gravity (CG) suddenly changed. It's going to be difficult enough to say goodbye to your dream machine, but what if? What-ifs cover a lot of possibilities. What if your front-seat passenger bailed out and all of a sudden the nose pitched straight up? What if you're flying your single-seat aircraft, you've jettisoned the canopy, and when you stood up to exit, the nose of your aircraft pitched up. Could this happen to you? You bet it could, and it has happened. Have you considered the possibility of having to add nose-down trim in a hurry before you're pinned to the turtledeck or the back of your seat? It's already gone from a great day to the worst day of your life, and it's not over yet. You may only have one or two seconds to deal with it. Can you think of other (what-if) scenarios unique to your aircraft that could make the difference between buying your parachute rigger a bottle of their

favorite booze or you buying the farm?

Now is the time to prepare and have your game plan indelibly inscribed in your head. Remember, when you have an emergency, time is critical. Not being prepared may cost you more than time. You've heard me preach before about the four mental steps on bailing out. I call the first step the "Oh s*@*" step or the "I have a problem" step, followed quickly by step two. I call step two the "What do I do?" step. This is immediately followed by step three, the "How do I do it step," and finally as the clock ticks away, you reach

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step four, which I call the "Doing it step." Wouldn't it be nice to eliminate steps two and three and go directly from the denial of step one to step four? Having spoken to many people who have bailed out, I've come to the conclusion you'll never skip step one, but being prepared and having a plan will move you directly to step four after a very brief expletive-deleted step one. Time is critical. Having committed your bailout procedures to muscle memory will save you time and quite possibly your life.

As the flying season progresses and the temperatures rise, I've received several calls from concerned parachute riggers about parachutes that came to them for servicing with the suspension lines sticky or lightly stuck together. I've also received a couple in my shop. They all have one thing in common. They've come from hot, humid climates. This can also include the trunk of your car. This condition doesn't appear to affect the opening of your parachute and can easily be neutralized by your rigger. Some parachutes have resin-treated suspension lines to

help protect them from abrasion and damage. On a few canopies the amount of resin treatment on the lines was more than ordered. Kind of like the waitress putting too much butter on your toast. That's why I order mine dry. On very rare occasions the lines can become sticky, especially—as I mentioned before—in a hot, humid climate.

If your rigger finds your lines this way and is concerned, you may explain the following solution. They'll be amazed at your knowledge. Tell your rigger they should soak the lines in Woolite or other mild soap solution for a few hours. Then, *very gently massage the lines in their hands for a few minutes*. This loosens any remaining resin, and it washes right off. *Do not use hot water*. Cold or lukewarm water only. Rinse the lines in fresh water several times. Drain the water and squeeze the lines gently. *Do not wring them out*. Hang or lay them on a clean surface (like towels) to dry thoroughly. One or two days will be sufficient at room temperature. Your rigger should replace all the rubber bands that held the lines in place, just in case some of the resin has stuck to them. If you ship your parachute to someone to pack, ask your rigger to check your lines carefully, especially if you live and fly in a hot, humid climate. You can also have your rigger call or e-mail me, if they have any questions.

Speaking of questions, I could always use a few more. My Weegie Board (or Quija Board) could use your help. I also have several seminars planned in the coming months. If you're planning an event or competition, please consider a bailout seminar. Check my website for details and for upcoming seminars. I look forward to hearing from you.

Remember to practice, practice, practice your bailout procedures before and after each flight.

Learn it – link it – live it.

Fly safely and blue skies.

IAC