



Don't fall out

The importance of proper parachute adjustment

LET ME START OFF BY WISHING everyone a very happy holiday season and a joyous new year. A special greeting goes to Reggie Paulk, the editor of *Sport Aerobatics* for all his hard work.

Another year has literally flown by. I swear the year only had six months in it. I'm happy to report there have been no major incidents or accidents. My last bailout with equipment I packed was in 2009, and that's just fine with me.

However, just because I've had no problems doesn't mean that everything is coming up smelling like poinsettias. I would like to draw your attention to making sure your parachute is adjusted and fitting properly. Within the past six months there have been two emergency bailouts that fortunately ended happily, but the outcome could have easily been much different.

In one case the individual forgot to refasten one leg strap after undoing it during flight. In the other incident, both leg straps were undone.

Usually this leads to a disastrous ending, but both individuals managed to hang on for dear life. I've been in the parachute business for a very long time, and both these individuals were very lucky. The couple of other incidents I'm aware of did not end so well.

Please review my September 2013 and March 2014 "Ask Allen" columns for tips on properly adjusting your harness. If you have any questions about the proper fit, have it **checked out immediately** by your rigger or someone knowledgeable on the proper wearing of your parachute. I've also had several people send me photos with their parachutes on for me to make sure they were properly adjusted.

I would like to review winter flying again and remind you of some personal equipment hazards you may encounter if you decide to fly in cold weather. I covered this extensively last year. Rather than repeat myself, please go to my December 2014 column for special tips and requirements for flying with bulky winter clothing. Heavier than normal

clothing can create some very interesting moments. You can either dig through your back issues of *Sport Aerobatics* for the column, or you can find it on my home page. Once there click on "Ask Allen" on the left.

If you really have nothing to do this winter, I also gave a bailout webinar for the IAC this past May. You can also access it from my home page. Scroll down a bit and you will find easy directions on how to bring it up. Below that you can make a copy of my bailout seminar handout material that follows along with my webinar.

Remember, your parachute also needs a warm and cozy place to spend the winter. . .

Remember, your parachute also needs a warm and cozy place to spend the winter—especially if you're heading to Florida or Arizona to wait out the winter by the poolside. I suggest keeping your parachute in a plastic box with a snap-on lid, like the ones you can get at the big box stores. It'll help keep the moisture and critters out. I've also touched upon this several times over the years. You can go to my December 2007 or December 2008 columns for additional information on the proper storing of your parachute

during the winter or, for that matter, anytime.

The same holds true when shipping your parachute to be serviced. It doesn't have to arrive in a plastic box, but here are some tips to follow. Most of my customers have learned their parachutes need to be properly protected. They ship them in their carry bags and then place that into a plastic garbage bag for additional protection before shipping. If you don't have a carry bag, I would encourage you to purchase one, but at least place it in a plastic garbage bag or two. The shipping boxes usually arrive okay, but once in a while they arrive wet. Getting water on your parachute is not the end of the world (assuming it's water), but it will need drying and that can take several days.

Most of us make New Year's resolutions, and most, including mine, fall by the wayside (or is it waistside) soon after the holiday decorations are put away. Here's one I hope you will consider making. Plan on inviting me to give your

group an emergency bailout seminar this coming year. No, they are not entirely free, but they are affordable and could save your life. I gave more than a dozen seminars throughout the United States this past year and am booking for next year. My seminars are not limited to just the United States. I have traveled as far away as Australia.

My seminars themselves are always free. The only requirement is your group must cover my travel expenses and lodging. I will provide all the handout material, and I do have a PowerPoint projector if you do not have access to one.

Before or after I give my presentation, I am more than willing to check out each of your parachutes and answer any questions or discuss problems you may have with your parachute or how to egress your aircraft. I do not limit the time I'm with your group to just my seminar.

Until then, take care, fly safely, and my best for a healthy and prosperous new year.

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