

Parachutes

Objective

This SOP describes the actions needed to maintain club-owned parachutes in a serviceable condition and to ensure that if the parachute is used, it will function as designed. Although the SOP does not apply directly to privately owned parachutes, private owners should follow the principles it sets out.

The SOP does not cover the wearing or emergency use of the parachutes; these aspects are covered by instructors as part of the training syllabus.

Administration

The Club has a designated parachute manager (Ken Brown), who oversees the management of parachutes, including the transport to and from the repackers. The current schedule for repacking is every four weeks, apart from exceptional circumstances.

Numbers and Types

The club owns 17 parachutes, of roughly equal numbers, manufactured by Strong and Thomas Sport. FDF has a parachute from a different manufacturer.

Location and Labelling

Every parachute has a label on the pop-top (numbers 1-14, DG1, DG2 and FDF). Each parachute has its own bag, marked with the same identification labels, and has a designated slot in the parachute rack in the loft over the briefing room in the old clubhouse. The slots in the parachute rack are labelled to match the parachutes. All except EKF's are in the first two racks nearest the steps. EKF's slot is on the top row of the third rack.

Operational Status

A status board is situated on the wall downstairs in the old clubhouse opposite the outside door. The board indicates whether a parachute is serviceable or not and the date it is due for repack.

Repacking

Periodic repacking is necessary to air the canopies and to get rid of any set creases. It also provides the opportunity to inspect the whole assembly. Manufacturers specify various frequencies for repacking, but it is Club policy to repack all parachutes at 6 monthly intervals, because of the heavy usage they receive from Club members.

Parachutes ready for repacking or unserviceable should be placed in the repacking container. The repacking container is a large "open" box located in the parachute loft opposite the third rack.

Care of Parachutes

Parachutes must be kept clean, and in particular protected from moisture, oil and acid. For these reasons parachutes must be kept in their bags, whilst in the parachute rack and when being transported between clubhouse and gliders.

- Do not leave parachutes on the ground or damp surfaces.
- Do not use parachutes as wing weights whether in the bag or not.
- Do not leave parachutes exposed to the elements.
- Do not leave parachutes in the glider overnight.

Use of Parachutes

Before flying:

1. Select the parachute appropriate for the glider: DG1 and DG2 for the DG 505 and FDF for the Astir CS. The other 'chutes are not designated for specific use, but shorter pilots should use the Thomas Sports, because if the top of a Strong 'chute is bent forward it will partly open the pack.
2. Take the 'chute to the glider in its bag.
3. Remove the 'chute from the bag and stow the bag securely in the glider. The K8s and K13 have soft pouches for this purpose, other gliders have stowage areas.
4. Inspect the 'chute (Daily inspection). The inspection should include:
 - a. There is no sign of the pack coming adrift
 - b. The parachute is within its repack date as indicated on the label attached to the right hand side of the parachute strap, or if the label is missing, the status board in the clubhouse.
 - c. The whole assembly is dry.
 - d. The straps and buckles are in good condition
 - e. The clips function correctly.
5. If there is a perceived problem with a parachute, refer to an instructor, and if the problem is confirmed return the 'chute to its bag with a note explaining the problem and place it in the repack box in the parachute loft. Note that the 'chute is U/S on the status board. Do not erase the repack due date, because some defects can be rectified without a repack.

At the end of flying

1. Replace the parachute in its bag.
2. Return it to the parachute loft and put it back in its correct numbered slot.

Note: It sometimes happens that parachutes are stored in the wrong bags. If this happens, try to find the correct bag, but as a minimum make sure the parachute itself is in the correct slot. This is because it is an unnecessary chore for the person taking the 'chutes for repacking if a required parachute is in the wrong slot in the wrong bag.