



Parachute Industry Association

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March 21, 2022

**** FOR PUBLIC RELEASE ****

Re: High-Altitude Safety Stand-Down

Skydiving Community,

The Parachute Industry Association (PIA) held its First Regular Meeting of 2022 at the end of February. During the meeting, the Technical Committee discussed commercial high-altitude operations within the sport of skydiving. The goal of the discussion was to determine what, if any, actions could be taken to improve the safety of this activity.

As a result of the committee discussion, two actions were agreed upon by the members.

The first action is for the Technical Committee to produce a document detailing best practices for high-altitude operations.

It is the goal of the committee to reach out to all members of our industry with experience operating at altitudes where different hazards are inherently present in order to determine the best way to mitigate the risk. As PIA is not a regulatory body, we believe our duty is to provide education and guidance to the community, and that regulators may eventually use that guidance in order to create and refine the rules governing this activity.

The second action was to issue a recommendation to industry for a Safety Stand-Down.

The motion as agreed reads:

“That PIA issue a statement that we advise a temporary Safety Stand-Down for jumps above 17,999 feet MSL for commercial sport skydiving until a document can be created for best practices. We anticipate the Safety Stand-Down be for a period not to exceed 12 months.”

The motion was agreed by the Technical Committee and referred to the full membership, which also approved the motion as PIA’s official position.

By approving this motion, PIA is recommending the suspension of all sport skydiving activities above 17,999 ft MSL. The altitude was chosen to coincide with the FAA Class A airspace definition. The committee determined that above this altitude special procedures apply beyond the common skydiving environment. The committee believes that there is a gap in knowledge and regulation, and that the gap is of such an importance that operations need to be suspended while best practices are established.

The committee recognizes that there are different risk levels associated with different altitudes, and the risk mitigation procedures will vary depending on the chosen environment. The level of care appropriate to a Big Way at 19,000 ft will differ from the level of care that is appropriate for a jump at 40,000 ft. It is the goal of the committee to provide appropriate guidance that is commensurate with the level of risk undertaken by the operation.

The Parachute Industry Association is publishing this message in order to encourage all industry participants engaged in this activity to conduct a Safety Stand-Down. The goal of the Stand-Down should be to evaluate the ability of an individual operation to cope with the risks of the high-altitude environment, review and improve risk mitigating procedures, and incorporate the set of best practices that will be produced by PIA.

Within PIA, the Technical Committee will begin the process of reaching out to industry participants (skydivers, DZOs, Skydiving organizations, Human Physiology experts, etc.) for their input in crafting this document. We will be reaching out to our contacts within and outside of PIA that will be willing to contribute to the effort and have the experience and knowledge required to assist our community.

Our goal is solely to increase the level of safety in our industry. PIA is not an investigatory or regulatory body. There are other organizations tasked with those duties. We recognize that high-altitude operations may carry increased risk when compared to regular sport skydiving activities, and thus require additional equipment and training. It is not the intent of PIA to eliminate these operations, but rather to provide a framework that will increase the safety of the activity and lower the rate of injuries and fatalities in the future.

PIA will continue to engage with all experienced members of our industry such as the FAA, USPA, military operations, and skydiving centers across the world, in an effort to promote the safety of this sport we all love. While we compile the information, we ask that all jumpers, pilots, DZOs, riggers, gear manufacturers, and everyone else involved, to help us promote this Stand-Down so that we can increase our level of safety through the collective knowledge of those who have been there before.

For now, please direct your questions to hq@pia.com and stay below 17,999.

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Chair, Technical Committee