



To: *World Parachute Organizations (Safety & Training Divisions)*

Date: *22 April 2020*

From: *Parachute Industry Association - Technical Committee*

Subject: *Request - Hard Canopy Opening Statistics*

Dear Colleagues,

The *Technical Committee* of the *Parachute Industry Association (PIA)* is planning to undertake a study relating to “hard canopy openings” that may have led to serious injury or death to the parachutist.

Statistically, fatal injuries caused by hard canopy openings are somewhat rare in the United States. Since 2000, the U.S. Parachute Association reports eighteen (18) fatal accidents that reportedly involved hard main canopy openings, which in many cases caused the parachutist to be non-responsive after opening. USPA’s data is included herein for your review. The ratio of incidents versus total number of jumps made during the past 20 year period may seem comparatively minuscule, with approximately one (1) fatal incident occurring every 3 million jumps (\pm) in the USA. However, 14 of the 18 fatal incidents involved jumpers 59 years of age or older. The physical fragility of this age group may be the primary reason for this statistical anomaly.

USPA data shows that jumpers in the 60+ age category made approximately 12% of the 3,326,400 jumps performed in 2019; 12% equals 399,168 jumps. During that year, we lost three (3) jumpers due to hard openings; their ages were 68, 76 and 81. This translates to one (1) hard opening fatality per every 133,056 jumps for these senior jumpers in 2019. Comparatively speaking, this is a sobering statistic.

Our goal is to identify the potential causes of hard canopy openings and to inform our membership what they can do to reduce the potential for future hard openings.

The *PIA Technical Committee* would like to invite all national aero clubs to participate in this information gathering project to learn what we can regarding hard canopy openings worldwide.

If your association would like to participate in this long-term study, please respond via email to (technicalchair@pia.com).

Thank you for taking the time to consider this project. The PIA Technical Committee sincerely hopes that you will join us in our quest to work towards a safer future for the benefit of all skydivers!

Respectfully,

T.K. DONLE

PIA Technical Committee Chairman

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