PIA Standard Operating Procedures - SOP-312 v2

Parachute Industry Association Publications

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Technical Committee – Standard Operating Procedures

I.   General

This document defines the policies and procedures under which the Technical Committee (TechCom) operates. Included within are methods for submission of change proposals, procedures for committee evaluation of such proposals, voting procedures and policies, procedures for document revision, and committee membership policies.

Nothing here is meant to conflict with the association's by-laws or articles of incorporation. In the event of such conflict, the by-laws or articles of incorporation shall take precedence.

II.   Purpose

The Technical Committee's two primary goals are:

- To improve overall safety for users of personnel parachute assemblies
- To provide technical standards to the parachute industry, for the manufacture and use of personnel parachutes

The Committee will endeavor to keep its PIA Technical documents up to date to the greatest extent practical, with the nominal goal of issuing revised documents at four- to six-year intervals.

The PIA Executive Committee must approve any change in the scope of the Techcom's activities.

III.   Document Updates and Revisions

Technical Standards and Technical Bulletins created by the Technical Committee will be accompanied by a revision list documenting all changes and the reason for each. These documents and accompanying revision lists will only be modified after specific verbiage is approved by committee vote.

Changes to TechCom publications are initiated by change proposals, which will be evaluated by the committee. Following approval of a change proposal by committee vote, the document and revision list will be updated and distributed via the mailing lists. The revision list and technical document date will be updated each time the document is revised. Document dates will be in the format (yyyymmdd).

Upon TechCom approval of a final draft, the document will be forwarded to the PIA membership for approval. If approved by the PIA membership the document will then be forwarded to PIA document publications, the FAA, and any other government agency requesting copies.

IV.   Change Proposals

All document revisions originate from a change proposal. Both committee members and nonmembers may submit change proposals. Change proposals must be submitted by email to the committee chair, or through the PIA web site.

Change proposals should be in outline form and must contain the following:

- Section to be changed
- Change being requested
- Reason for change
- Supporting data
- Contact information for submitter, including name, organization (if applicable), address, phone, and email address

Incomplete or invalid change proposals may be discarded. Change proposals that are the same or similar to proposals already discussed, voted on, and rejected will be considered invalid if submitted within one year of ballot vote date unless supported by a petition endorsed by the majority of the TechCom, or additional, new, substantiating data is presented.

Valid change proposals will be assigned a number in the following format: "CP – date of proposal (yyyymmdd) – Technical Document number" (ex. CP-20210821-SOP312). Outstanding change proposals that are similar may be combined.

Proposed document changes will be implemented upon approval by committee vote.

V.   Voting

When an issue, change, or full revision of a document is ready for a vote, the vote will be conducted in person, by email, or by other electronic means where appropriate. No committee vote will be considered valid unless:

1) At least 50% of committee members take part in the vote
2) A simple majority of respondents approve the action/change.

Should more than 20% of voting members abstain from a vote, the issue may be returned to discussion or tabled at the discretion of the chairperson.

For email/electronic discussion and voting, there will be a comment/discussion period of up to 30 days before the issue comes to a vote. The discussion period may be ended early if 50% of voting members approve.

In-person votes shall occur after a separate vote to end discussion.

When voting by email or other electronic means, the vote to end discussion may, at the discretion of the Chair, be accompanied by the vote on the issue itself. Voting members will then cast two votes on the same email or electronic document: one to end discussion, and another on the issue at hand. Issue votes will be discarded if a plurality of voters wish to continue discussion.

VI.   Correspondence

The chairperson shall make every reasonable effort to inform members of pressing matters. The committee's primary means of correspondence shall be email. Members are encouraged to keep emails brief wherever possible, providing supporting documents as attachments. Such attachments should include the member's name, subject matter and date in the header.

The chairperson's primary goal shall be to process change proposals through the committee as efficiently as possible. However, the chairperson shall allow a free-form discussion of any relevant issue, whether in person or via email. The chairperson shall guide discussions to a logical conclusion in the shortest practical time. When it appears that an issue is ready for vote the chairperson may initiate an email vote or schedule an in-person vote for the next meeting.

The chairperson is responsible for maintaining the TechCom mailing list. However, it is the mailing list member's responsibility to keep the chairperson updated with any changes or corrections.

VII.   Meetings

The Technical Committee shall meet twice each year, during the PIA regular business meetings. Additional meetings may be held as necessary and will be announced via the TechCom mailing list. The chairperson will work to maximize member attendance at each of these meetings.

The chair shall maintain a running agenda of items to be discussed at the next meeting. As much as possible, the agenda will consist of review and evaluation of change requests in sequential order. Additional items for consideration may be added as new business during the meeting.

Meetings will be loosely governed under Robert's Rules of Order. As specified in section V., a quorum of 50% of voting members shall be required for the committee to take any official action.

VIII. Attendance and Work

Committee members may have an alternate member attend committee meetings. An alternate member will only be considered to meet the committee member's attendance responsibilities if the alternate is knowledgeable on the subject matter, current on the issues being discussed, current on the status of the document, and actively participates in the meetings.

Committee members who fail to attend meetings, respond to emails in a timely manner, participate in email discussions, or fail to participate in email votes may be removed from the committee. Committee members who fail to complete assigned and agreed to tasks in a timely manner may be removed from the committee. The chairperson shall evaluate all extenuating circumstances before making the decision to remove a committee member.

IX.   Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes are a legal document, which could be subpoenaed by a court of law. Therefore, the minutes shall not be a verbatim record of the discussion, but shall include specific, relevant and concise statements from members and other attendees. A summary of committee activity between meetings will be included.

The official minutes of the meetings shall specifically reflect the exact wording, and the recorded votes of the members, for action items only.

The minutes shall include a roster of those in attendance.

X.   Membership

The Technical Committee shall consist of an elected chairperson and at least four other voting members appointed by the chair. The chairperson will endeavor to establish and maintain a balanced committee, seeking representation of all groups affected by TechCom work, so that all points of view might be heard in an open forum.

Committee members are expected to contribute to committee work. Committee members must be PIA members or represent PIA member organizations to have voting privileges. Each committee member shall have one vote on committee issues, no matter the number of PIA member organizations they may represent. Committee members who are unable or unwilling to uphold the responsibilities of membership may be removed from the committee at the discretion of the chairperson.

Alternate members may be given the authority to act on behalf of a particular member who is unable to attend a meeting, as deemed appropriate by the committee chairperson. Alternate members are encouraged to attend all meetings so that they may keep aware of committee activity.

Those who wish to become members of the Technical Committee should communicate their interest to the chairperson.

XI. Correspondence Addresses for PIA Technical Committee

TechnicalChair@PIA.com

Parachute Industry Association
Technical Committee
6499 S. Kings Ranch Road #6-12
Gold Canyon, AZ 8511