SAFETY INFORMATION

03/25

Tandem Student Harness Lateral Strap Ejectors

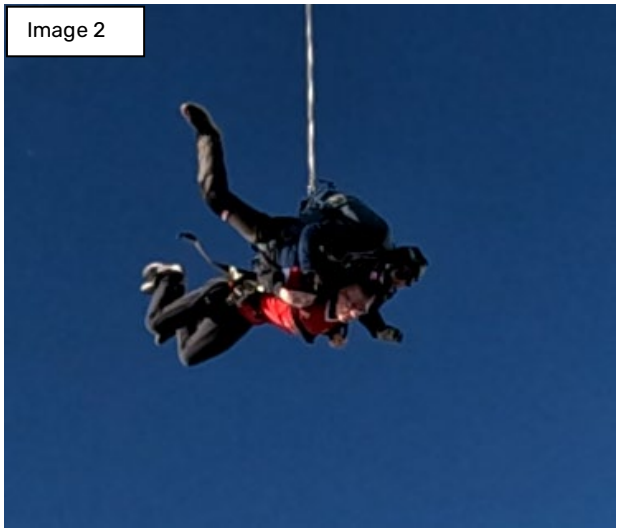
Background

British Skydiving has received two separate incident reports, thirteen months apart from each other. On both occasions, the tandem pair experienced a disconnection of the right-side lateral ejector.

On both occasions, it's believed that the ejectors were connected before take-off and tightened up prior to exit (See Image 1 below). The disconnection was experienced on two different types of tandem system.

Image 1

Image 2

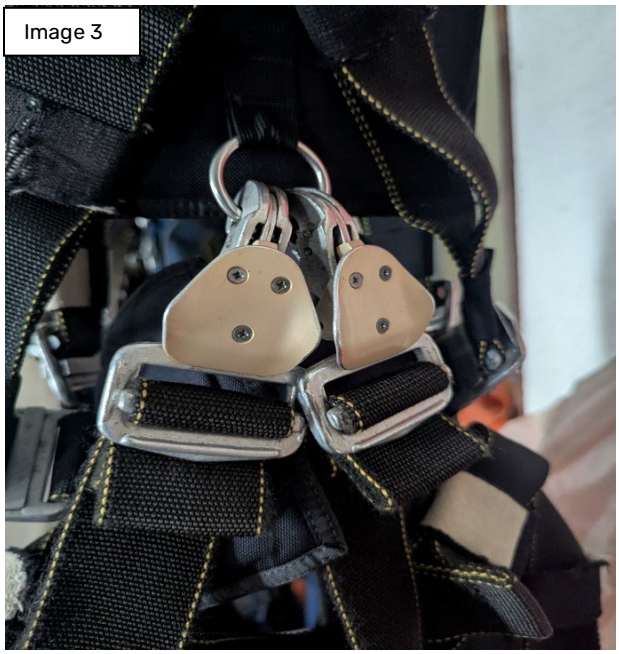


Incident 1 happened on a Sigma Tandem System, where incident 2, happened on a Next Tandem System.

After the most recent incident (See image 2 above), on the Next system, it was found that the student harness was fitted with butterfly style side ejectors (See image 3, right). It is believed the side ejector may have been caught on the edge of the metal bench when moving on to the floor ready for exit.

The butterfly ejectors have an extended surface area, which allows for a quick release, under canopy and after landing. The extended surface area is likely to be a factor, for any premature disconnections of the lateral side ejectors, should they catch on the edge of a bench.

Image 3



Findings

The following points have been identified as known or potential risk factors:

1. British Skydiving has no record of the ejectors in image 3, having been approved for use on Student Equipment. Any modification to student equipment must be approved by the Riggers' Subcommittee before use.

2. Aircraft benches may present exposed metalwork, sharp edges or snag points (See images 4 & 5 below), particularly where bench systems have been adapted, repaired, modified or worn.

3. Extended surface area release ejectors, quick ejectors modified with quick release webbing tabs modified webbing tabs, may be more susceptible to unintentional contact or snagging when the instructor transitions from a seated position on a bench to a kneeling or seated position on the floor of the cabin, inside the aircraft.

4. Snagging may occur without the Tandem Instructor being aware, especially when operating in confined cabin areas.

5. If snagging leads to partial or full release of a quick ejector, this may not be visually identified by the Tandem Instructor, even during the handles check in the door.

Image 4

Image 5

Recommendations

Parachute Training Organisations (PTOs) and Chief Instructors are recommended to implement the following measures:

1. Clearance of modifications on student equipment:

   Any PTO using these butterfly style quick ejectors (See image 3) on the side lateral straps of tandem student harnesses, must have these removed and taken out of service, until otherwise officially cleared by the Rigger's Subcommittee.

2. Movement within the aircraft:

   TIs must exercise additional caution when moving from bench seating to the aircraft floor.
   If there is any doubt that a harness connector may have contacted the bench surface, a positive physical check of the lower connection points must be performed immediately.

3. Aircraft bench inspection & hazard mitigation:

   PTOs operating aircraft fitted with bench seating should conduct an SMS-based inspection and risk assessment, focusing on identifying the following:

   - Exposed or sharp metal, hardware, or corners.
   - Potential snag points or protrusions.
   - Requirement for protective coverings.

   Chief Instructors should ensure that these considerations are incorporated into operational SOPs, training briefs and SMS documentation. Where hazards are identified, protective material must be fitted. As a temporary control measure, duct tape or approved interim protective coverings may be applied until permanent mitigation is completed.

4. Harness & ejector type awareness:

   When using student tandem harnesses modified with webbing pull-tabs, increased awareness and care must be taken during all in-aircraft movement.

5. Jumpmaster responsibilities:

   Jumpmasters, camera flyers and other personnel inside the aircraft should be briefed on:

   - The potential for side-lateral release disconnection.
   - Their role in visually monitoring and assisting with identifying possible disconnections prior to exit.

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Distribution:

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Maintaining the highest safety standards in our sport.