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SAFETY NOTICE N0 25 - 02

To: All Operators, SMS managers, Tandem Instructor Examiners, Tandem Masters and DZSO's

Subject: Updated Sigma Tandem Emergency Procedures and Standard Operating Procedures.

Compliance: Recommended

Date of Issue: 15 May 2025

Compliance due: Recommended immediately

Emergency Procedures Background:

The UPT Tandem Program Director, Neil Wilcox has recently analysed and updated the Sigma Tandem Emergency Procedures. These new procedures, although not wildly different from what we are all used to, still have some important changes which should be noted.

Emergencies have been categorised with 4 different procedures:

1. Total Malfunctions
2. Partial Malfunctions
3. Open Container with Drogue issues
4. Third Party entanglement

The procedures cover 7 phases of Tandem jumping:

1. Aircraft Emergencies
2. Freefall Emergencies
3. Drogue Fall Emergencies
4. Deployment Emergencies
5. Post Opening Emergencies

6. Entanglements

7. Hazardous Landings

Recommended compliance:

The NZPIA **HIGHLY** recommends that anyone who operates Sigma Tandem Equipment familiarise themselves with the new [Emergency Procedure Document](#) as soon as practicable.

Standard Operating Procedures Background:

We trust the manufacturer to provide us with Emergency Procedures to mitigate the known risks in Tandem Skydiving learnt from more than four decades of design, development, testing, incident analysis and constant improvement. It is reasonable to trust the same manufacturer to specify the best, and safest Standard Operating Procedures to minimise those risks.

In 2023 the FAI concluded that the world had completed just over 1.2 million Tandem Skydives. New Zealand completed 58 000. The USPA, the APF, the Canadian Sport Parachuting Association and British Skydiving represents some 54 000 skydivers. The NZPIA represents less than 600. Our isolated experience and occurrence data set is minor compared to the global information gathered. We learn from, and evolve through collaboration and information sharing .

I do not believe that we can further regulate for better safety outcomes. We can, and should educate, and guard ourselves against the normalisation of deviance from the procedures we have been provided to mitigate risks.

Recommended compliance:

The NZPIA **HIGHLY** recommends anyone using a Sigma Tandem system follow the standard operating procedures as specified by the manufacturer.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Student Harness fitment as illustrated on page 11 of the [UPT Sigma Manual](#).
- Student harness being in a jumpable configuration prior to boarding the

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- Freefall Handles Checks as described on page 123 of the [UPT Sigma Manual](#).
- Reattaching the student lower attachment points to the instructor harness after being loosened post opening.

The NZPIA also **HIGHLY** recommends that no Tandem Master partake in any activity prohibited by the manufacturer, currently including, but not limited to:

- Canopy Relative work.
- Intentional cutaways.
- Intentional water landings.
- Night descents.
- Tandem Wingsuit.
- Non traditional flying (e.g free flying).
- Intentional delayed drogue deployment, other than during tandem master training.
- Using a Go Pole on any similar pole type handcam device.
- Wearing helmet mounted cameras.
- Canopy turns greater than 90 degrees below 500ft AGL.
- Wingsuit flybys.
- Intentional multiple backflip exits or backing out from side door aircraft.

Please feel free to get in touch with me directly should you require more clarity on any of the above points.

Be safe out there!

David du Plessis
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
NEW ZEALAND PARACHUTE INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION (NZPIA)

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