

ALL YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT EMERGENCY PARACHUTE EGRESS, BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK!

As the club safety officer, I endorse the wearing of a parachute, especially for aerobatics and spin training.

Remember, if you elect to use a parachute it is because you have lost control of the aircraft and will likely not survive. Competency by jump training with parachutes for emergencies is not an absolute requirement in my opinion, and this is based on discussions with parachute instructors. Without instruction your risk of injury is greater, but in an emergency situation when you are only planning to jump once, your chance of survival is greatly increased by having a parachute. Remember that emergency parachute descents have been successful from circuit height.

What you need to know about using a parachute is as follows!

When you make the decision to egress, remember to identify your seat belt release mechanism and locate your "D" Ring parachute release handle (you want to do this before you get a blast of wind in the face possibly undoing your parachute harness by mistake).

Next, jettison the canopy and release your seat belt (you may fall out at this point), stand in the seat and push away clear, wait a second or two to clear the glider.

Pull the "D" ring firmly straight ahead with both hands, fully away from your chest (most of the pins that hold the container closed present a large amount of friction, so does the wire in its sleeve, possibly delaying the opening if pulled by only one hand).

You should be initially in a tucked position, arms in, bent at the waist, your chin down on the chest, and legs together straight out. This will help maintain your stability and to prevent your limbs from interfering with the parachute deployment.

Keep your **knees** and **feet** touching together (this will unlock the knees) for landing to reduce injury. How stable you are when you leave the aircraft and where you land are more significant safety factors than any training. The important thing is to remember to pull the ring!

Some glider canopies are difficult to jettison at certain attitudes/speeds and may have to be forced away with your feet (not an easy task). Find out if this applies to your type.

We have tried egress drills in simulation on the ground with extra personnel to hold the canopy when released and found it to be less than eight seconds to complete the process. Including the time for parachute deployment, successful attempts therefore could be made from as low as 1000 feet AGL.

Don't forget to DI your parachute for obvious problems before the flight. In addition, if anyone who normally does not wear a chute decides to wear one because of the particular exercise of an upcoming flight, that person should familiarize himself with the jettison mechanism of the particular glider, inspect it for condition, and do the same with the chute. Things to look for include frayed cables, or risers (parachute cords) starting to come out and bent pins. These pins get bent as a result of chute mishandling, it's better to know about this condition before going up. In addition, don't rest your parachute on the ground as will draw in moisture potentially causing rot. Wear your parachute snugly in flight. If you use club gliders and can't find a comfortable parachute, buying your own is a good option. However, if you intend to jump for practice or as a sport this is another matter. Get competent training and proper equipment from a qualified school.

Free Flight

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