



SAFETY ADVISORY

Issued by Angus Pinkerton - Chairman of the Flying & Safety Committee, 1 November 2000

All pilots must READ, DIGEST AND TAKE ACTION on the contents of this Notice and keep it for future reference.

If you hold a copy of the BHPA Technical Manual this notice must be inserted into it and retained until it is withdrawn or superseded on instructions from the Chairman FSC.

HG HARNESS INTEGRITY

There was a hang gliding fatality in France recently where a pilot fell to his death. Investigation showed that he had failed to fasten the buckles on the harness which holds the leg loops in place. These buckles are inside the harness. There was no safety buckle at the top of the harness and the zip opened completely, allowing the pilot to fall out of the harness. Further investigation (and a second incident report) revealed the existence of other front-loading harnesses which rely on the zip for their structural integrity.

FSC would like to remind all pilots that failing to fasten any buckle or zip on a harness may have fatal consequences. Leg loops must be done up! When changing harnesses, especially to the newer HG low drag types, pilots need to be very vigilant about pre flight checks, as the correct fastening of internal buckles may no longer be ascertained through a simple visual check. Changes in harness design may require complete changes in pre flight check methods.

With regard to front loading hang gliding harnesses, FSC strongly advises that pilots should choose harnesses that do not rely solely on a zip for their integrity but have buckles/straps or other combinations to provide backup in the event of zip failure. In the past this has been done with two buckles on the majority of harnesses, at either end of the top zip, at chest and waist level. New designs may change this, but pilots should satisfy themselves that in the event of total zip failure they will still be held securely in their harness and that they would have sufficient harness integrity to be able to deploy their Emergency Parachute.

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