



# SAFETY NOTICE

Issued by Angus Pinkerton - Chairman of the Flying & Safety Committee - 10 September 1997

*All pilots (including Safety Officers, Coaches and Instructors).*

*If you hold a copy of the BHPA Technical Manual this notice must be inserted into it and retained until it is withdrawn or superseded on instructions from the Chairman FSC.*

## Parachute Attachment

On 23rd March a French pilot died when, following a major suspension line failure (see FSC.SN.14)) his parachute system also failed. Investigations have revealed that he had interlocked the sewn loop at the end of the fairly stiff, 40mm flat webbing parachute bridle with the sewn loop at the end of the softer, narrower 'Y' bridle that connected to the reserve attachment points on the harness. When this junction pulled tight during the free fall reserve deployment the 'Y' bridle cut right through the parachute bridle. (This was a 'hot knife' cut, due to the heat generated by the compressive loads.)

### DIAGRAM OF FAULTY CONNECTION

#### **Action:**

You should not have any direct webbing to webbing connections in your reserve system. An 8mm diameter square maillon is recommended for this location (Breaking Strain over 2700kg, and large diameter construction that will not cut into the webbing). You should locktite the threads before doing up the connector, and use rubber bands or similar to ensure that the webbing sits on the flat top and bottom portions. You should inspect this area regularly, along with your entire reserve system.

#### **Alternative courses of action are:**

1. Thoroughly encase the webbing forming one side of the connection in a natural fibre (eg cotton) bandage. This reduces the frictional heat build up which occurs when man-made fibre materials come into contact. (Unfortunately it is not clear how effective a natural fibre sheathing would have been in this particular case where the dissimilar stiffness of the materials was so pronounced.)
2. Paraglider pilots might consider the purchase of a two riser parachute that avoids intermediate connections altogether.