



SAFETY NOTICE

Issued by Angus Pinkerton - Chairman of the Flying & Safety Committee, 19 April 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If you hold a copy of the BHPA Technical Manual this notice must be inserted into it and retained until it is withdrawn or superseded on instructions from the Chairman FSC.

HARNESS BUCKLES

A pilot recently reported having a quick-release buckle come undone in flight. Luckily he was able to land safely.

Our information is that a faulty batch of these buckles was produced some time ago. It is known that Apco and System X use these buckles, and it is possible that other manufacturers may have used them. Efforts have been made in the past to recall all affected products, but this recent incident shows that this has not been totally effective.

If you have a buckle identical to the one illustrated below you should examine it very carefully to see if any combination of loading, twisting and pulling can make it disengage. With the buckle held in front of your chest as it would be with a fastened paraglider harness chest strap, apply a considerable force trying to pull the male end out of the female. Whilst maintaining this loading, try to pivot the male end out of engagement, using up and down movements replicating the loading and movement on a paraglider chest strap when the pilot weight shifts. Try several times.

Any buckle that does come undone should be replaced before further flight, consult the harness manufacturer about this. A BHPA Incident Report Form should be submitted.



(See also Safety Matters, September 1999 and November 1998)