



SAFETY NOTICE

Issued by Angus Pinkerton - Chairman of the Flying & Safety Committee - 22 May 1997

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If you hold a copy of the BHPA Technical Manual this notice must be inserted into it and retained until it is withdrawn or superseded on instructions from the Chairman FSC.

Paraglider Line Failures

There have been two fatalities in Europe recently resulting from the failure of paraglider suspension lines. Both accidents are still under investigation, but the following details have been released.

The first accident involved a French team pilot who, during a series of tight spiral dives prior to landing, suffered a number of main suspension line failures which resulted in his death. On examination it was found that he had replaced the original 2.4mm lines with 1.1mm lines.

The second accident involved an Austrian pilot flying a prototype wing using micro lines. On recovery from a series of deflations the canopy suffered line failures.

The message from these fatalities is:

Firstly, it is imperative that lines are checked regularly and, at the very least, annually by the manufacturer or dealer. Those pilots who insist on flying canopies with 'micro' lines are strongly advised to check their lines particularly frequently, and to renew them well before they reach the end of the manufacturer's recommended component life.

Secondly, paragliding canopies are not designed for radical manoeuvres and aerobatics. Such activity puts great strain on the canopy and lines, dramatically increasing the rate of deterioration and in some cases causing immediate failure. In a steep spiral dive loads of up to six times the norm can be achieved causing considerable stress to both fabric and line.

Thirdly, making unauthorised modifications (eg changing the lines) can be extremely dangerous. Not only can the structural integrity of the canopy be adversely affected, but the handling and recovery characteristics can also be altered for the worse. Making an unauthorised modification to a canopy renders the certification null and void.

Even if you are using standard lines on a standard wing you must treat your lines with great care, remaining vigilant for any signs of damage. If there is any doubt about the line's integrity, replace it.

Your attention is drawn to Safety Notice "BAPC - SN - 03/92.4"; "Suspension Lines" FSC Page 6, Skywings January 1996; "Lines" FSC page 17, Skywings April 1996; "Board of Inquiry Reports" FSC page 10, Skywings June 1996.