

SAFETY ADVISORY

Issued by Angus Pinkerton - Chairman of the Flying & Safety Committee. 08 August 2025.

All paraglider dual pilots should read, digest, and take action on the contents of this advisory notice and retain it for future reference until it is superseded or withdrawn by the FSC Chairman. This notice will remain available on the BHPA website.

ACCIDENTAL OPENING OF PUSH-BUTTON RELEASE CARABINER IN TANDEM PARAGLIDING

The BHPA has been made aware of a recent incident reported by the FIVL (Italy) in which a quick-release carabiner opened during a tandem paragliding reverse launch. Fortunately, the pilot was able to abort the take-off before an accident occurred. This was captured on a video (link at foot of this Advisory).

Background.

Quick-release carabiners fitted between the spreaders and risers are commonly used in tandem paragliding. Many carabiners are fitted with a push-button safety mechanism to prevent unintentional opening. However, it has been demonstrated that during a reverse launch, the emergency parachute bridle maillon on one spreader can slide against the quick release button of the carabiner on the other spreader, simultaneously disengaging the safety catch and opening the gate - sometimes capturing the maillon. This is most likely when the carabiner gate is oriented inwards.

If the maillon becomes captured in the opposite side carabiner, effectively fastening the spreaders and risers together, this could lead to loss of control with catastrophic consequences.

The stills are captured from the video and are displayed here to illustrate the issue further:



Image 1: Emergency parachute bridle maillon slides against opposite spreader carabiner button and gate, allowing it to open.



Image 2: Emergency parachute maillon now locked in the carabiner – spreaders and risers now fastened together (highlighted in red).



Recommendations.

The FIVL Safety Note makes the following recommendations:

- **Orientation:** If using quick-release carabiners in your spreader to riser connection, install them with the gate opening outwards. This significantly reduces the likelihood of accidental release or capturing of the maillon as described in this Advisory.
- **Alternative hardware:**
 - **Maillon Rapides (screw link connectors):** Cannot be opened accidentally and provide the most secure option.
 - **Two-movement carabiners:** Require a twist and pull to open. Still vulnerable if gates face inwards.
 - **Three-movement carabiners:** Require lift, twist, and pull. Offer greater resistance to accidental opening, but not complete immunity.
- **Inspection:** Regularly check the installation and condition of all carabiners, particularly those used for tandem operations.
- **Load rating:** Ensure all connectors used are rated appropriately for tandem loads.

In addition, the BHPA notes that some manufacturers supply spreaders with 'soft' bridle connections. These spreaders incorporate a spreader loop designed to accept a direct spreader to bridle connection (no maillon required). Both the spreaders and emergency parachute bridles must be appropriately sheathed to prevent friction damage if a load is applied.

Summary

No quick-release carabiner is completely immune to accidental opening by friction. Pilots should consider hardware choice and orientation carefully, and routinely inspect connectors as part of standard safety practice.

Further information:

FIVL Safety Note:

<https://www.fivl.it/index.php/sicurezza/lista-avvisi/3689-avviso-di-sicurezza-apertura-accidentale-di-moschettoni-rapidi-per-parapendio-biposto>

Incident video shared by Giovanni Negro:

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/yS4rEaN7YSQ>
