

Continuing Airworthiness Notice – 05-004



Tandem Parachute and Passenger Harness Maintenance

14 November 2012

Issued by the Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand in the interests of aviation safety. A Continuing Airworthiness Notice (CAN) is intended to alert, educate, and make recommendations to the aviation community. A CAN contains non-regulatory information and guidance that does not meet the criteria for an Airworthiness Directive (AD). The inspections and practices described in this CAN must still be carried out in accordance with the applicable NZCAR Parts 21, 43 and 91.

CAN numbering is by ATA Chapter followed by a sequential number for the next CAN in that ATA Chapter.

Applicability:

All tandem parachutes and tandem passenger harnesses.

Purpose:

To advise operators of tandem parachutes and tandem passenger harnesses of CAA requirements regarding maintenance and standards.

Background:

Following certification of Part 115 parachute operations, and follow up compliance audits, there appears to be a wide variation of maintenance procedures and maintenance standards by tandem parachute operators. While the container and main canopy are inspected at 25 jump intervals, the reserve inspected and repacked at six month intervals, AAD replaced in accordance with manufacturer's requirements, the passenger harnesses generally have no regular inspection carried out. CAA have seen a number of passenger harnesses that are far from satisfactory with badly frayed webbing, torn stitching, corroded fittings and clips with broken springs.

By definition tandem parachute rigs are classed as aircraft, registered and identified on the Operators Operation Specification (Ops Spec.). *Rule 115.61 requires operators to establish a maintenance programme for every aircraft, including a parachute assembly, operated under the authority of the certificate. The maintenance programme must include instructions and procedures for the performance of maintenance on the aircraft (parachute) including any required inspection and test of the aircraft (parachute) and its components, together with details of the parts and areas that – must be inspected and could result in failure, malfunction or defect endangering the safe operation of the aircraft (parachute) if maintenance is not performed properly or if an improper part or material is used. There must be a schedule for the performance of maintenance expressed in terms of time in service, cycles, calendar time, number of system operations (jumps) or any combination of these.*

A passenger harness is considered one of the components making up the entire tandem parachute assembly and as such, is required to be inspected and maintained along with the container, main canopy and reserve parachute at, industry best practice, 25 jump intervals.

Requirements:

Operators are required to implement a system of recording jumps performed by passenger harnesses in the same manner as the 25 jump inspection records for the container, main canopy and reserve parachute. The records must be able to identify the passenger harnesses (e.g.: serial number) to which the records relate. When detailing inspection procedures, consideration must be given to manufacturer requirements and inspection procedures. Where a manufacturer has no detailed inspection criteria reference should be made to the Parachute Riggers Handbook published by the FAA and/or Parachute Handbook Volume 1 and 2 published by Dan Poynter when developing an inspection schedule.

It is recommended all passenger harnesses be inspected for serviceability and 25 jump records raised before further use, but no later than 30 November 2012. Any passenger harnesses not meeting inspection criteria to be labelled unserviceable and quarantined until inspections or repairs can be carried out by a qualified person.

Operator Expositions are to include inspection criteria of tandem parachute assemblies including passenger harnesses.

Enquiries:

All other enquires regarding this Continuing Airworthiness Notice should be made to:

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