

# TANDEM NEWS



**A PUBLICATION BY STRONG ENTERPRISES  
FOR TANDEM INFORMATION**

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**3000 TANDEM JUMPS**

**Artie Paton makes 3000th tandem jump.**

Artie, a Strong Tandem Examiner, who has been tandem jumping since 8/29/86, is in charge of the tandem jumping program at the Perris Valley Skydiving School. In training over 100 tandem instructors, Artie has proven himself to be a tireless, dedicated tandem examiner, who's efforts never fail to win superlative comments from the course candidates. Congratulations Artie!, and thanks for being one of the corner stones of tandem jumping history.

**PIA SYMPOSIUM '95**

Strong Enterprises will be giving two presentations:  
1. "TANDEM SIDE SPIN PHENOMENA", by Bill Morrissey

**Side Spins.**

Although reported side spins occur approximately 1 per 1000 tandem jumps, they have proven to be extremely difficult or impossible to recover from. One case resulted in a tandem fatality. Strong Enterprises has been investigating these spins, as well as conducting test jumps to determine how they get started, what keeps them going, how to stop them, and what procedures to follow when you cannot stop them.

**2. "EMERGENCY PARACHUTES AND THEIR USE" by Ted Strong. A source for extra income.**

There are over 5,000 emergency parachutes through-out the US. Inspection and repacks are untapped sources of income by most parachute centers. Learn about new innovations in designs.

*S.E. will host a Tandem Instructor meeting, one evening during the PIA symposium.*

**PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE**

A loose drogue pouch, and worn drogue bridle velcro on the outside of the "original style" main container, allowed enough of a drogue and bridle to work it's way out of the pouch so as to have the kevlar bridle wrap around the arm of the instructor as he attempted drogue deployment. Eyewitnesses state that everything was secure before exit. The instructor had to hold the bridle, down and away, as he deployed the reserve. "Preventive maintenance" is the term that we should be thinking about in regards to this incident. Incidentally, SE has made several changes to the container dealing with the security of the drogue and bridle to the container. Don't forget the container trade-in policy that is designed to help you keep pace with the safety improvements to your system, as well as keeping pace with the cosmetic demands of "if it looks new, it will probably work".




**It's not just another ....**

**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year**

**Be Safe-SkyDive-Be Safe-SkyDive-Be Safe-SkyDive**




## LAWSUIT

### FLINKINGSHELT vs. TANDEM

On November 27, 1992, two skydivers conspired to make a tandem jump in violation of the law. The person acting as the tandem instructor was not factory trained and certified to use the Dual Hawk System, which was used on this jump. The jump resulted in the death of the innocent passenger, while the "tandem instructor" received minor injuries.

Here are five ways how this "accident" affects all of us:

1. The family of the victim is suing:  
a] the owner of the parachute, who allowed its illegal use.  
b] The "tandem instructor" who killed the student passenger.  
c] Strong Enterprises, the manufacturer of the equipment, and co-holder of Exemption 4943.  
d] Relative Workshop, issuing agency of a tandem certification for which the applicant was not legally qualified; also co-holder of Exemption 4943.  
e] USPA, named to victim and her brother by the perpetrators, both verbally and as part of written information they used.
2. We believe that the family will follow up on their stated goal of stopping tandem jumping by attacking the tandem exemption, the privilege under which you make tandem jumps, by going back to the FAA in Washington, DC.
3. The manufacturers, who are charged with managing operations under Exemption 4943, have to decide what changes have to be made in order to make staying in the tandem business worthwhile.
4. Those changes will most certainly include strict adherence, by owner/operators, to all the

provisions of Exemption 4943. Particular emphasis will be given to records keeping, which is the only work that the owners have to do in order to comply with Exemption 4943.

5. Other changes will include: [a] a written "Owner/User" agreement, [b] a written "Tandem Instructor" agreement, [c] a tandem jumping SOP for daily operations, [d] greater penalties for violations.

This arbitrary decision on the part of these two skydivers will make things more difficult for all of us, but not unreasonably so, or impossible. We're all going to have to cooperate and do things the way they have to be done. These changes will have little effect on persons already in compliance

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### **Strong Enterprises has made the decision to remain in the tandem business.**

You can help yourself avoid future problems by understanding the key points of this case as they apply to your tandem business.

Focus of this lawsuit seems to be drawn to:

[a] the fact that this victim did not sign a SE waiver, which clearly states that tandem jumping is an experimental program that is conducted under an exemption, and that the jumper is an experimental test jumper. This aspect must be explained to all tandem passengers.

[b] the student passengers were not "...enrolled in a tandem parachuting course" as stated in Exemption 4943. Historically, persons making their first jump "enrolled in the 1st jump course"

by signing a waiver and paying the course fee, not by signing an enrollment agreement or contract. The plaintiff has made this an issue, which may be avoided in the future by using an "Enrollment Application and Training Syllabus" that Strong will provide to the Dual Hawk owners.

[c] "...direct control and supervision..." as stated in Exemption 4943 is an issue that may need some clarification and reinforcement. The manufacturers "control & supervise" the tandem programs by: 1] establishing training programs for the instructors and the students, 2] conducting tandem instructor certification courses, 3] promulgating the working parameters contained in Exemption 4943, 4] charging those instructors with the responsibility of adherence to the exemption.

Tandem owners and instructors are provided with copies of the Exemption, therefore, you know what the law is, and you are expected to obey that law.

Tandem jumping in the USA is still being conducted under Exemption 4943, and will continue for the foreseeable future. If you wish to continue your operations under this Exemption, you will have to comply with all the terms of that Exemption and other terms that Strong Enterprises has determined that are necessary in order for SE to continue tandem operations.

Strong Enterprises has made the decision to remain in the tandem business. You have to be prepared to do your part if you are going to join us.

You will be made aware of what you must comply with through a series of mailings which will explain the details, and where possible provide forms to be used.

**Facts about this one suit:**

There have been over 25 days (8 hours per day), of depositions so far. Each hour of deposition costs \$1,000.00 per hour of attorneys fees.

Strong Enterprises has incurred over \$85,000.00 in cost so far. The case will probably go to trial in February '95. It is anticipated the trial will last three weeks. SE presented over 150 lbs. of log forms and 11 years of records to the attorneys for review.

**TANDEM LOGS, IT'S THE LAW**

A major point in the FLINKINGSHELT vs. TANDEM lawsuit is management of the program by the manufacturers. The plaintiff's attorney is attempting to show that if a tandem system owner's jump logs are not up to date, then the Exemption is being "mismanaged". It's important to understand that the father of the victim, in response to the question "What do you hope to accomplish with this lawsuit?", testified "**Stop tandem jumping**". If that does not get your attention, it should.

**If you choose NOT to  
comply,  
WE'RE GONNA  
MISS  
YA!**

We feel that the Flinkingshelts along with the Kings [passenger in Al Stevens fatality] will take the findings in this trial and return to Washington in order to have their Congressman and Senator try to have the Exemption revoked. Bottom line: If you jump within the

jurisdiction of the FAA you must supply the manufacturer of your tandem system with jump logs that provide the information requested in Exemption 4943 [use SE tandem log form]. If you choose not to comply **WE'RE GONNA MISS YA!**

**ON-SITE INSPECTIONS**

Strong Enterprises has monitored tandem activities by direct visits to DZs, in-person or telephone interviews, or by the receipt of phone calls from concerned skydivers. Recent DZ drop-in visits showed:

1] Use of non-standard parts on tandem system. "Tandem is not just another skydive" is not restricted to referencing the technical differences between tandem and solo jumping, it also means that: [a] tandem is a business, [b] students have a perceived sense of safety because their instructor is in their harness with them, and [3] the passenger in a tandem fatality is not "some skydiver that got himself killed", instead, he is viewed as a victim and his survivors, justifiably, want answers.

Therefore, for as long as we operate under an exemption, or perhaps beyond that, the manufacturer will have to insist that only parts approved for use on that manufacturer's tandem system, may be used on that system. The same would apply to any modifications to the tandem system.

2]. Incorrect use of system. "Found": Two cases of ALS [anti-line slump] D-bag misuse ( As discussed in TANDEM NEWS, volume #16.) When you look at the mechanics of the proper use of the ALS bag you can't help but to say, " Yeah, the cradling of the stowed lines during

bag snatch really makes sense". Except that what we may consider obvious, might not be so obvious to the packers out there. If you do not understand the directions, or you never received them, ask us. Use the equipment as it is intended to be used and we will all continue to move forward safely.

**EQUIPMENT INFO**

**1. Bare cable problems.**

In the welding together of the 19 individual strands of wire sometimes a single wire is left loose on the end. These difficult to see, loose wires usually show up when the cable is pushed along the irregular surface of the interior of the housing. In one case the loose wire was observed to have bent 180 degrees and penetrated the three ring locking loop like a fish hook. The bench test required 97 lbs. of pull force to activate the breakaway  
Be observant! Strong Enterprises will be happy to replace any breakaway handle with a loose strand.

*A short story.* The bare cable is supposed to pass thru the locking loop, not the woven material that the loop is made from. One tandem instructor, during his post deployment equipment check, observed that one of the cables was indeed pushed thru the loop material. The strength of this loop, which was holding his riser to his harness, was now substantially reduced. This got his attention, now, I hope it has gotten yours!

**2. Addressing the problem.**

Strong Enterprises has a reputation of being dynamic, in that we continue to make product improvements to our tandem system, based on what we perceive to be safety related

changes as well as changes to improve the performance of our equipment. Here is a brief look at some of the most recent changes and what prompted them. Premature opening of the main container was one of the factors in several tandem fatalities, including a Strong tandem fatality . In looking at the possible scenarios we concluded that two factors could cause the premature opening of the main container: [a] a broken closing loop, or [b] accidental extraction of the main closing pin. We are now jumping prototype containers that: [a] will not release the main d-bag in the event of a broken closing loop, and [b] can not have the pin extracted from the closing loop without having released the drogue. I'm really excited about these improvements and comfortable in evaluating them. Look for them at our booth at the PIA SYMPOSIUM '95.

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### Like you, I also enjoy feeling safe making tandem jumps.

The above mentioned accidents also included failure to release the drogue before breakaway and reserve activation. Now standard on all Dual Hawk Tandem Systems is the unique "breakaway/drogue release". This release addresses the problem, of failure to release the drogue before breakaway, by attaching the drogue release ripcord to the breakaway handle. [see Bulletin #19, this issue].

Our 3rd tandem fatality involved a tandem side spin without activation of the drogue, main, or reserve. We have been collecting data and videos ( we need more, please! ),

performing test jumps, and we will present these findings at the PIA SYMPOSIUM '95.

Our 1st tandem fatality involved no deployment also, and our 4th fatality involved a low activation of the reserve.

These no deployments and low deployments, along with the technological advancement, and excellent history of the CYPRES, have prompted Strong Enterprises to mandate AADs on all Dual Hawk Tandem Systems as of 1 July 1995. [see Bulletin #19, this issue].

Why am I telling you all of this? I believe that it is just as important for you to be confident knowing that we are working for your safety, as it is for your students to know that they are safe in your keeping. I hope that the above information will have the desired effect of giving you confidence in the equipment that you are using, through the knowledge of how Strong Enterprises is working for you. Like you, I also enjoy feeling safe making tandem jumps

Product Service Bulletin #19. (All Dual Hawk owners should have already received Bulletin #19, but we are reprinting it here just in case. See page 7.)

#### SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND TANDEM JUMPING

A unpleasant subject at best, but disgusting at the very least.

Strong Enterprises does not license tandem instructors to go out and abuse tandem students physically or verbally. It is a big black eye to our industry to have actress, Dana Delaney, on the David Letterman Show and in the

Associated Press, tell the world that her tandem instructor insisted that she kiss him during the canopy descent. The lady was grossed out!

Now we have a report of another Don Juan?, jerk?, sleaze ball?, regular guy?, telling this woman [who really came to make a skydive] about his "...fifth point of attachment". The woman was not satisfied with the response from the DZ so she complained to USPA who notified the manufacturer. There is a rumor of a lawsuit.

What could possibly be going on in the minds of these "persons"? Why would they risk being benched or thrown out of the game?

Several drop zones have established a policy which basically states: " These tandem students are my customers, the tandem instructors are paid to take them on a safe skydive. The tandem instructors may not even ask my customers for a date".

The tandem jumping process involves touching, the passenger is vulnerable, so we must be as professional as a doctor. On a practical note, just in case you've been lost in space, sexual harassment suits are being pursued in every segment of our society. If you don't have access to the "info highway", read a newspaper!

#### TANDEM INCIDENTS

##### Student injuries.

One incident report states that the wind was steady at 15-20 mph, and that 25 ft. above the ground the canopy was hit by turbulence and took a nose dive to the right. The student panicked and stuck his legs out in front of him. He took

the full force of the landing, severely breaking both ankles. As a pilot I seem to recall being taught that turbulence usually is associated with high winds. With that in mind, I often wonder why tandem operations continue while experienced jumpers are on the ground waiting for the winds to die down. Of course I have an opinion, but SE would like to here some opinions from the readers. SE recommends that student tandem operations cease in winds above 15 mph. What do you think is safe and prudent? Please give us a minute of your time, your comments probably need to be heard, I'll pass them along [without your name].

**"CHUTE ASSIS" TANDEM**

**Chute Assis is skydiving in the sitting position. It's new!, it's hot!** So I wasn't surprised when Christian Schoemig, of Skydive Key West called to tell me that he has been using it for tandem exits out of the cargo door of a Cessna-206. He then generously supplied me with info and videos, and some enthusiasm.

Strong Enterprises has always strived to be innovative in creating techniques for presenting the tandem experience in our training programs, so, I was more than a little interested in exploring "Chute Assis" to see what part, if any, it could play in either the training of the tandem instructor or for exits with tandem students.

After a few attempts with experienced skydivers, I decided that it was not as easy as I thought it would be, but I began to get a grasp on it. It would have been more prudent to learn on solo jumps, then transition to tandem. I am looking at this technique to use on one jump in the training of

tandem instructors, because it introduces the relative wind from a new angle, which requires that the instructor find that relative wind and then use it properly in flying, thereby making him more aware of the environment in which he is working.

The "Chute Assis" technique may also prove to be practical for exiting from tailgate airplanes in that it requires little body movement to assume the sitting position in freefall from having been standing at the edge of a tailgate. It is fairly easy to fly once the position has been established, and easy to assume a face to earth position by performing a 3/4 backloop from the sitting position.

"Tony Suits", of Z-Hills, FL., has made it infinitely easier to make "Chute Assis" jumps with their "Sit Suit". Chuck Karcher and Bill Morrissey, each veterans of over 1000 tandem jumps, have explored the "Tandem Chute

Assis" at no drogue terminal, while using these suits. It does require more than one jump to become proficient! We were moving right along, with "Kenny the Camera" Ahlberg chasing us around on three jumps while wearing 20 lbs. of weights. While less then perfect, it was a good learning experience. After exiting at 13,500 ft. AGL, we had a working time of approximately 30 sec. before backlooping out of it and preparing to open at 5,000 ft.

In the pursuit of educational research, and having taken some precautions, we managed to have a lot of fun. Will this type of skydiving be compatible with tandem jumping? I think it will in the instructor program, but we will have to experience more of it before we know how to use it with students. If you want to try this type of jumping, I suggest that you try it solo, wearing a "Sit Suit".

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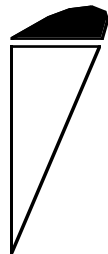
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### **PRODUCT SERVICE BULLETIN**

#19

01 November 1994

### **DUAL HAWK TANDEM UPDATES MANDATED**

**STATUS:** Mandatory.

**IDENTIFICATION:** Strong Enterprises Dual Hawk Tandem part no. 1165-4 (TSO label references SE assembly drawing No. 1151).

**BACKGROUND:** This bulletin mandates five updates that were previously recommendations.

**SERVICE BULLETIN:** Inspect all Dual Hawk Tandems for compliance and unless previously updated, make the following changes in accordance with instructions available from Strong Enterprises:

- (1) Replace yellow-cable cutaway handle with breakaway drogue release PN 862020. (Ref. 3/13/94 addendum to DHT Manual and Tandem Jumping #15, Feb. '94.)
- (2) Change type VIII main risers to type VII main risers. (Ref. Tandem News #14, March '93.)
- (3) Change reserve free bag from light blue bag with nitrile O-rings or rubber bands to orange bag PN 730324 with bungee stows and plastic chokers. (Ref. Tandem News #7, Jan. '91; NOTE: This bulletin cancels Service Bulletin #10.)
- (4) Modify Master reserve canopies manufactured prior to 10 Sept. 1990 by adding reinforcing tape across tail. Canopies not previously updated will have stabilizers that stop about 1 1/2" short of the tail, while updated units will have the stabilizers sewn directly to the tail.
- (5) Install Cypres AAD. (Ref. Tandem News #12, May/June '92 & TN #16, Aug '94.)

**QUALIFIED PERSONNEL:** Master parachute rigger or foreign equivalent.

**COMPLIANCE DATE:** Cypres installation by 01 July 1995; other four items by 01 January 1995.

**DISTRIBUTION:** DHT owners/operators on record, national aero clubs, PIA, USPA, Skydiving, Parachutist.

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