



To: *Military Parachute Rigging Facilities*

Date: *5 June 2013*

From: *T.K. DONLE – Technical Director - CPS*

Subject: *Y-Strap Modification for Tandem Student Harness*

Equipment: *Sigma & Vector Tandem Student Harness (Sport Versions)*

Advisory – PSB Clarification

Background

United Parachute Technologies (UPT) recently issued Product Service Bulletin “PSB-20132005” on May 20th, 2013. This bulletin calls for the mandatory addition of the “*Retractable Y-Strap Modification*” to all “*Sport*” Tandem Student Harnesses. This PSB has a compliance date of December 1st, 2013 which should help mitigate interruptions in your operational capabilities.

Important Note: This PSB only affects Sport/Civilian Student harnesses manufactured by UPT and does not affect SOV3 Military Tandem Student Harnesses.

The “Y-Strap Modification” was introduced in 2011 by UPT to the sport tandem parachuting community as an optional “product improvement.” The Y-Strap is designed to better stabilize the student within a poorly adjusted harness to help prevent the student from falling out of the harness.

CPS Advisory

Our goal at CPS is to assist each military customer in managing their own equipment and training programs to best serve their needs. We recognize that product improvements are a never-ending process that must be properly managed. The military may choose or not choose these improvements depending upon a number of variables: Safety concerns, immediate needs, evaluation of test results, how implementation will affect an extensive fleet of equipment, additional rigger/operator training requirements, and other factors.

Our goal is to provide our customers with timely, pertinent information so informed decisions can be made. CPS has been monitoring the implementation of the “*Retractable Y-Strap Modification*” for Sigma/Vector tandem student harnesses since it was first introduced in 2011. The Y-Strap was developed following a number of incidents that were the result of civilian tandem operations jumping students with grossly misadjusted harnesses. In our estimation, the Y-Strap is an appropriate response by the manufacturer to reduce injuries and liability when students are allowed to jump with improperly fitted harnesses.

This is the Root of the Problem - Failure to Properly Adjust the Student/passenger’s Harness.



Product Analysis

Sport and military tandem student harnesses are nearly identical in design; the primary difference is the addition of cargo rings and possibly a butt-strap that connects the legstraps. Why has the manufacturer (UPT) decided to make the Y-Strap mandatory for sport equipment and not military equipment? Quite simply, this action is in direct response to “how” the equipment is being used and “how” the manufacturer can reduce the exposure of students to unnecessary and avoidable risks which are inherent in civilian parachuting programs that lack structure, protocol and consistency; all of which are vital in maintaining a safe parachuting program.

Although we have not monitored every nation’s military tandem training program and daily operations, it has been our observation over the years that military training programs are far more disciplined and standardized. As a result, their safety levels are significantly higher compared to civilian operations. Additionally, no reports of student/passenger harness issues have been made to CPS or UPT since the beginning of military tandem jumping in 1986. We may not receive a report for every parachuting incident that occurs, but the rumor of a military incident will generally reach us. With regard to tandem students and harnessing issues, no information has ever surfaced that we are aware.

However, the Y-Strap is a recommended modification that may enhance the safety of your training program and future tandem operations if you choose to add it to your existing SOV3 student harness configuration.

Basis for Action by the Manufacturer

Continued reports from the field from sport tandem operations have caused great concern at UPT regarding the misuse and lack of consistent procedures for student harness adjustment. Failing to follow well-documented Sigma/Vector harness adjusting procedures has resulted in the death of one (1) student and the near loss of two (2) others over the last several years. Even though each incident involved unusual circumstances (severely handicapped, advanced age, over-weight), all of these incidents could have been avoided with a properly adjusted harness.

To ensure the safety of future student/passengers, the manufacturer (UPT) now mandates that all sport tandem student harnesses be outfitted with the “Retractable Y-Strap.” The goal is to reduce or eliminate the possibility of injuring any student. Additionally, this modification will reduce product liability exposure created by the actions of those tandem operators whose conduct cannot be controlled by the current authority within the sport parachuting world.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Our military loft maintains both Sport and SOV3 military tandem equipment. Our command will require that we modify all models of student/passenger harnesses so the equipment and procedures remain consistent.

A. Your military SOV3 harnesses may also be updated with the Y-Strap. Contact your CPS-AE to facilitate this configuration change. Most SOV3 models have a “butt-strap” connecting the legstraps, which will require a different version of the Y-Strap (CPS-P/N for the kit: CPS-151-818). The kit for the standard Sigma or SOV3 harness without butt-strap: (CPS-151-832)



Q. Can we perform the Y-Strap modification to SOV3 student harnesses in our loft?

A. Yes. Contact your CPS-AE for more information. A “work instruction” will be created to facilitate this repair in your loft for models fitted with a butt-strap. UPT produced work instruction “*INSTRUCT-020 REV 2*” for modifying harnesses without the butt-strap.

Q. If we decide to have CPS do the installation of the Y-Strap Kit, how can we arrange this?

A. Contact your CPS-AE to request an RMA (Return Material Authorization) and order the appropriate kit(s) with installation services. (CPS-P/N: CPS-151-825 for butt-strap models) (CPS-151-849 for models without the butt-strap)

Q. Will there be a cost associated with the “*Military Y-Strap Kit*” for student harness models that have the butt strap?

A. Yes, contact your CPS-AE for pricing.

If you have any questions regarding this advisory, please contact CPS technical support.

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