

## Australian Parachute Federation

### Recommended Tandem Water Landing Procedure

Established by a panel of Cis , DZSOs and other interested parties in April 2018

All operate at Coastal Drop Zones and have some experience with accidental and intentional water landings. The following recommended procedure was compiled by the panel over 3 days of River and ocean exercises including live tandem drops.

The panel considered the following to be best practice:

Listed in order of priority

#### **Under Canopy**

As soon as a water landing appears to be unavoidable;

- Fit and inflate the Tandem Students life vest.

*The panel discussed this option at length and considered a myriad of scenarios involving entering the water with an inflated or uninflated life vest. All of these were simulated during the river exercises. At the start of the exercise some members of the panel were undecided or even in favour of inflation after entry but by the end of the day all were in favour of inflation first. Some of the issues addressed were;*

➤ ***Injury to the student with an inflated jacket or damage to the jacket.***

*The panel agreed that, rather than creating a risk of injury , an inflated jacket would afford support and protection in most landing scenarios. The impact required to burst a jacket or injure a student would most likely stun or render a passenger and Instructor unconscious, a situation in which it would surely be preferable to be wearing an inflated jacket..*

➤ ***Becoming trapped underneath a canopy with an inflated jacket***

*The river exercises showed it to be far safer under a canopy with an inflated jacket. The best thing to do underneath a canopy was to stay connected, stay calm and follow the canopy seams to the way out using raised hands to move the canopy and create an airspace..*

*The theory that diving down and swimming out from beneath a canopy before inflation is a dangerous one as there is a strong possibility of entanglement in the lines and drowning.*

*Having a positively buoyant passenger in the water allows the instructor to deal with all the other tasks he may be presented with.*

*Any difficulty inflating the jacket can be managed whilst there's time under canopy. It was found during the exercises that it takes about six large breaths to inflate a jacket manually . Not an easy task whilst treading water.*

- ***Brief the passenger for water landing***

*Briefing should include holding the inflated jacket with both hands and pulling down firmly , Raising the legs up in front with bent knees ( this will assist in preventing the jacket from being forced upwards upon entry )*

*Taking a deep breath and holding their breath just before entry*

- ***Disconnect and stow side adjusters***

Very important to stow the side adjuster clips on the passenger harness in the closed position as they pose a risk of entanglement with lines in the water.

- **Disconnect RSL**  
Cutting away the main canopy after landing and before disconnection from the student was considered best practice.
- **Undo instructors chest strap**  
Consider how you thread your chest strap. Quick release might be useful.
- **Helmet**  
Instructors should check that their personal life jacket can fit over their helmet if planning to keep the helmet on for entry into the water. Visors should be open. Camera flyers should check this with full camera gear on their helmet.
- **Shoes**  
Shoes can be kicked off before entry into the water to make swimming easier. In cold water it may be wiser to keep them on to stay warm.
- **Land close to boats**  
If possible land close to boats for quicker rescue.
- **Land well clear of any breaking waves**
- **Face into wind**  
A slow gentle entry into the water is important. Face into wind for landing and try to minimise forward speed. Flaring a little high and dropping vertically into the water would be ideal. Remember that height perception may be a little harder above water. If landing with moderate forward speed try to roll to one side upon entry to present the instructors back to the water and prevent landing on top of the passenger.
- **Remind the passenger to hold their jacket firmly at the base of the neck and hold their breath.**  
Count down to the entry
- **If the canopy lands on top of you**  
Remain calm , following the seams of the canopy to the quickest exit using raised hands to move the canopy and create an airspace. Ask the passenger to help. Be aware that if you get away from the canopy in a downwind direction, it might drift towards you constantly.

Consider having a hook knife stitched to your skydiving pants/suit. If the only hook knife you have is on the back of the passenger harness, it will stay with the student after you are disconnected.

- **Cutaway main canopy**  
Make sure Main canopy is clear and cut it away. If under reserve and being dragged collapse the canopy by hauling in one brake line.
- **Unclip the passenger**
- **Fit and inflate instructors life jacket**  
If the reserve canopy is still in the container it will provide some buoyancy for a while
- **Remain close to the passenger.**  
Stay with your passenger. In rough water it may be necessary to hold onto a side adjuster to avoid separation but do not connect them to your harness in case they become panicky. Keep a safe distance from a panicked passenger, it may be necessary to keep them at bay with an extended foot.
- **In Cold water**
  - Consider swimming to the shore only if practicable. Remember that swimming accelerates heat loss. Remaining still in water increases survival time.
  - Conserve body temperature by keeping clothing on.

- The Heat Escape Lessening Posture (HELP) involves holding your arms tight to your sides and across your chest. Pull your legs together and up to your chest. A group of people can preserve heat by huddling together.