

# TANDEM

Newsletter

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## Do you know?

1. Who has the oldest Strong Tandem rating and is still jumping?
2. How long is your Class III Medical valid for?

Answers on page 2.

This newsletter is written for:  
**Packers, Riggers, DZ Operators, Strong Tandem Instructors & Strong Tandem Examiners.**  
Your comments are welcome.

## IT'S ALL ABOUT THE STUDENT

Tandem is an introduction to skydiving for the student for which you get paid to provide a life altering experience. You never know how your student will react or if any malfunction might occur, always be alert and prepared for the unexpected. Experience is great but it sometimes can be our worst enemy. Never cut corners! As a Tandem Instructor you are the person 100% responsible for your student.

### A Few Reminders..

1. Ensure that the person packing your gear is qualified, thorough and consistent.
2. Address any concerns you might see ahead of time, even if they might seem minor.
3. Be brief but detailed when educating your student on how the harness fits and it's attachments and what to expect from this experience.

4. Only teach the positive aspects of skydiving you want the student to perform. Never teach the negative. Example: "Don't grab my hands".
5. After you've ascertained the canopy is functioning properly, help the student enjoy their jump.

**It's all about the student!** Use and treat your gear responsibly, keep the jump simple and safe. Do not perform CRW, hook turns or any other risky maneuvers during the jump. What may seem a routine jump for you, is a very exciting experience for your student. Don't make it more than what it's meant to be: a standard well executed Tandem jump.

### IT'S ALL ABOUT THE STUDENT!

Blue skies & safe jumping,  
**-Tandem Department**

## One Student's Story

On July 30th 2009 in Sebastian Florida it happened. Ben decided to jump out of a perfectly good airplane. Having felt that skydiving was a ridiculous past time, when Ben started working for Strong Enterprises he never gave much thought to skydiving. When he was asked to be the passenger on a Tandem evaluation jump, he decided why not. Not only did he personally know his Tandem Instructor, he also knew the person who packed the rig, so the risk was minimized in his mind. In his own words:

"The most exciting part was sitting in the door with the wind blowing by and seeing the painting below, it was very surreal. It didn't even feel like we were falling because the air rushing past was supporting us. I put my arms out, looked at the water and saw the view that I always tried to get from inside

a jet. Relying on the parachute and my instructor, I felt a lot safer than hoping the pilot would land the plane. We only got 10 seconds of freefall because it was a canopy evaluation jump but it was pretty incredible and when the parachute deployed it wasn't violent like I had expected - I've experienced worse in my car!" - Ben.

We all have stories like this, even if we don't think about them very often. This is a prime example of the reason we here at Strong Enterprises think the tandem industry should adopt the new motto "**It's all about the Student**". After all, if we can provide a positive and exciting experience for students, they will bring back friends and in many cases return themselves time and time again, which will help our industry continue to grow.

## WHY “APPROVE” OTHER TANDEM COMPONENTS?

We don't like to hear about people getting injured while enjoying this sport that we love so much. When it comes to making our gear safe and reliable Strong Enterprises does not cut any corners. That is why we have Service Bulletin #22 and why we take it very seriously. For those of you who aren't familiar with Service Bulletin #22 (all Packers, Riggers, Owners and Tandem Instructors should be) it states:

**A) Only components approved by Strong Enterprises may be used on the Dual Hawk Tandem System for tandem jumping.**

**B) All Dual Hawk Tandem Systems shall have a service life of eight years from date of manufacture or be returned to Strong Enterprises for re-inspection and re-certification. Depending on condition it may then be placed back into service for five years (years 8-12 from the date of manufacture) at which point, depending on condition it may receive one final five-year re-certification (years 13-18 from the date of manufacture).**

The use of non-approved components in the Dual Hawk Tandem (DHT) System will void the TSO and consequently violate FAR's if the systems are used. Keep in mind that this puts not only the user, but the owners, packers, riggers and pilot of the aircraft in violation of FAA FAR's which could result in hefty fines and loss of privileges not to mention opening up unnecessary liabilities. Components for the DHT System must be approved! This is not because we are control freaks and want to limit the possibilities; it is because we want to be sure that any and all components used in this system are not only compatible, but more importantly safe and reliable. There have been far too many incidences resulting from the use of unapproved/untested components. Canopies must be evaluated for fit and function as well as performance during emergency procedures. Some of you may know that we recently approved the use of two

additional AAD's in the DHT System. Not only did we make sure that these AAD's fit properly in the DHT but we needed to be sure that they functioned during all possible scenarios. That doesn't mean we can just ask the manufacturer and take their word for it, we must do our own testing and evaluations. For the newly approved AAD's we did several drop tests including under drogue fall at low speeds, drogue-less at high speeds, drops with heavy loads and light loads. We needed to be certain that in any circumstance, best or worst case, the equipment would function as necessary while retaining the safety and reliability of the DHT System. In fact those AAD manufacturers made some minor adjustments and improvements as a result of the testing we did, bringing their equipment up to the standards we require in the DHT System.

Just as you must know the limitation of your sport equipment, tandem equipment also has different limitations to consider. You wouldn't try packing a canopy that was 3 sizes too small in your sport rig so why try it with your tandem rig. Testing and approving equipment is very expensive and time consuming. While we haven't asked other manufacturers to contribute to the costs of the testing, we do however need their cooperation when it comes to our requirements for safety and reliability. We also need them to provide us with equipment to be tested understanding that the equipment will be tested to the extremes and will not be resold after testing.

So please be patient, approval takes time. As soon as new equipment is tested and approved for use we will immediately send out notice and updates. Thanks for your continued business and understanding.

**-Mike Rinaldi**  
Sales Manager

### Do you know?

#### Answers...

1. Bill Morrissey T/I since 1983  
Bill Brandon T/I since 1988
2. A Class III medical certificate is valid for the remainder of the month of issue; plus
  - 24 calendar months for operations requiring a Class III medical certificate, if the airman is age 40 or over on or before the date of the examination, or
  - 60 calendar months for operations requiring a Class III medical certificate if the airman has not reached age 40 on or before the date of examination.

## MEET THE TANDEM STAFF



In order from left to right:  
Ted Strong, Evyan Santiago, Jessie Hanson, Mike Rinaldi

With the position of Tandem Director eliminated, the responsibilities have been divided between a few people. We are working hard to make this transition easy.

The division of work is as follows:

**Ted Strong:** T/E - The final word when needed.

**Bill Morrissey:** T/E - Any and all, questions, answers and concerns.

**Evyan Santiago:** All administrative duties, paperwork, ratings, cards, newsletters, etc.

**Jessie Hanson:** Manuals and newsletter articles.

**Mike Rinaldi:** T/I - Any sales information, new gear, repairs, etc.

**Chuck Mchugh:** T/E - Practical information, and questions about performance, design & solutions.

**“Kelley”:** Head Rigger and Inspector of new Tandem canopies and Tandem canopy repairs

**Lee Kizziar:** Inspector of new Tandem containers and container repairs.

**Larry Pittman:** Inspector of Tandem canopy repairs.

**Frank Deazley:** T/I - R&D of Tandem equipment.

Any information that you would like to see in future newsletters please send an e-mail to tandem@strongparachutes.com, with “Newsletter Article” as the subject.

**- Tandem Department**



**PROPER HARNESS ADJUSTMENTS:**

Proper harness adjustment is extremely important. Follow these simple steps which will ensure your passenger's safety and offer them a comfortable Tandem Skydiving experience. These steps can be found in your DHT Owners Manual (pgs. 7-10) or you can download them online from our website [www.strongparachutes.com](http://www.strongparachutes.com).

**1)** Extend all adjustments completely out to the stops.



**2)** Help passenger don the harness and position the harness on shoulders.

**3)** Fasten the chest strap securely.



**4)** Fasten bellyband so hip rings are to the front of wearer's hips and chest strap and bellyband are equally snug. The main lift webs should be parallel from shoulder to hip.

**5)** Tighten leg straps with leg pads just under the buttocks, and apex of leg straps are at hips.



**6)** Begin adjusting the main lift webs so sewn risers are centered on the shoulder, and butterfly snaps rest just behind the shoulder.



**7)** Tighten rear diagonals so harness is secure against passenger's back.



**8)** Tighten horizontal back strap. The lower harness should now be fitted and snug.



**9)** The Y-mod does not need to be excessively tight to work correctly. Pull down on excess webbing protruding from friction adapter located below harness back pad.



**10)** Stow excess webbing in elastic keepers.



**11)** Ensure passenger can still lift their legs with Y-mod secured. If the Y-mod is restricting the Passenger from lifting his/her legs loosen the adjustment enough to allow them to do so.



Your student should now be comfortable and secure in the harness. Be sure all extra webbing is stowed in elastic keepers.

**TIPS: WINTER TRAVEL FOR T/Is & PACKERS**

It's that time of year when Drop Zones in the north see a dramatic decrease in business or close down completely for the winter. However, many Drop Zones in the south remain open year round, and business actually increases during this period. Although it is hard to predict which Drop Zones will need additional instructors to handle the increased business in the south, we are certain many will! Check the classifieds on the back of Parachutist magazine or online at [dropzone.com](http://dropzone.com) for openings.

Strong Enterprises would like to offer a few suggestions to those of you who are in search of Tandem work during the winter months:

**Presentation**

**1.** Be on time and present yourself as a professional. If you have an appointment, arrive at least 15 minutes early to your

meeting. If you don't have an appointment, get to the Drop Zone before it opens when the owners and operators might have some free time to speak with you.

**2.** Ensure you are dressed appropriately, present yourself in a professional manner and that your equipment is clean and in good working condition.

**3.** Be polite, and sell yourself! Come prepared with information about your Tandem experience and knowledge of the sport.

**Documents**

Be sure to have all necessary documentation on hand when you arrive: USPA License - Strong Tandem Rating Card - Log Book - Class 3 Medical - any other documentation that might be required by an individual Drop Zone.

These are just a few helpful tips from the Strong Enterprises Tandem Department to

assist those of you looking for Tandem work around the globe.

As a reminder, if your Rating Card has been misplaced, lost or stolen, please contact us at [tandem@strongparachutes.com](mailto:tandem@strongparachutes.com), or (407) 859-9317 to receive a replacement Rating Card. You will be required to fill out a Tandem Instructor Questionnaire and pay a \$25 fee for the card.

Also, please be sure to inform us when your contact information has changed, whether temporary or permanently. It is important we are able to communicate with each and every one of you in order to provide you with up to date Tandem information, including service bulletins, equipment updates and current Tandem news.

**-Evyann Santiago**

# Thank You! TO OUR LEGAL DEFENSE FUND CONTRIBUTORS.

Pacific Skydivers  
WestPoint Skydiving  
Skydive City  
Keith LaRiviere  
TK Hayes  
Michael Donlon  
Jim Perkins  
Dick Tomkins  
Vernon Kloppers  
Brendan Kluge  
Packing Cathy  
Hooker Custom Harness, Inc  
Jump & Fly (Italy)  
Brian Grady  
Passenger Skydive Team,  
Eli's Fallschirmshop  
Skydive Newport  
Phanton Airborne Brigade

Strong Enterprises is thankful to all its Legal Defense Fund Contributors. Your contribution and support has been appreciated in our pursuit to defend our company and the Tandem industry as a whole through this unfortunate event. Your continued encouragement makes all the difference. If you would like to join our team of contributors, please contact our sales department at (407) 859-9317 or sales@strongparachutes.com.

*"Strong has always stood behind the gear and helped me dozens of times. So thanks for creating such a great team that provided me with so much help over the years."*

*- Jim Crouch / West Point Skydiving Adventures*

*(Contributor)*

## A MISSED DROGUE

Recently, a tandem pair exited from a C-182 at 10,500 ft. Stability became a problem as the student balled up and started flailing. Each time they came face to earth the TI felt that the drogue had been grasped and deployed. This drogue deployment attempt was acted out three times as the passenger continued to create stability problems. The TI then had some difficulty locating the reserve ripcord. The TI solved this dilemma by sliding their hand down the main lift web until the handle was found. The reserve deployed without incident.

What went on with this drogue deployment? The TI is adamant that the drogue pud was in hand and deployed.

Possibilities? The small size of the jumpers created excess side connector webbing, so we have to consider that the excess webbing was loose and may have been grabbed thinking it was the drogue. It's happened before! Another possibility is that the TI's hand went past the drogue pud and grabbed part of the drogue cap and drogue pouch. Plenty of food for thought here.

A positive thought to remember is sliding your hand down the main lift web if you can't find your reserve ripcord. This TI never got the drogue out so the handles touch could not help here. Locating the handles is one of the reasons that we do handles touches. The other

reason is to help the proper sequence of ripcord use become instinctive. Out of sequence deployments have resulted in 17 dead tandem students and 17 dead tandem instructors. People just like you and me. I've seen videos of instructors waving their hands at the handles as though performing this check for the video. Some drop zones do require a handles check - a great idea! Touch and recognize those handles, don't just wave at them. You need to know where they are NOW, not where they were when you were still in the plane.

*-Bill Morrissey*

## Announcements

### AVAILABLE NOW!

1. Updated Volunteer Parachute Jumper Waiver and Assumption of Risk Agreement.

2. New, 25-Jump Inspection Booklet

**Both of these documents are available online at [www.strongparachutes.com](http://www.strongparachutes.com).**

### TO COME!!

1. Updated DHT Owners Manual. You'll be able to download it from our website or request a hard copy for only US \$25.00.

2. Waiver video for DZ's and DHT owner.

3. TICC packet will include a CD with Main, Master Reserve and 25-Jump Inspection.

### SPECIAL REQUESTS!!!

1. We are asking for videos of Do's and Dont's for training purposes. If you have any that you would like to share please send them to tandem@strongparachutes.com.

2. We need all Strong customers and representatives to update their contact information. This includes Examiners and Instructors.

3. Like to see your name in print? Send us your stories for our "Featured Instructor" article.