


Irish Aviation Authority The Times Building 11-12 D'Olier Street Dublin 2, Ireland www.iaa.ie Safety Regulation Division	Údarás Eitlíochta na hÉireann Foirgneamh na hAmanna 11-12 Sráid D'Olier Baile Átha Cliath 2, Éire Rannán na Rialachán Sábháilteachta	No. OAM 05 Revision 00 Date 11.08.17	
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Title: Information for Persons engaged in Parachute Jumping in Ireland

1. Purpose.

This Advisory Memorandum contains information for persons engaged in sport parachuting from civil aircraft operated in Ireland.

2. Background


Sport parachuting is generally considered an aeronautical activity because parachutists usually use civil aircraft to transport them to a point above their chosen 'Drop Zone' (DZ). However, unlike pilots who must hold a pilot licence and aircraft which must have an airworthiness certificate, parachutists are not required by European aviation law to hold any specific qualification issued by a civil aviation authority. Parachute centres which provide parachute dropping services and equipment may be commercial companies dealing with members of the public or they may be clubs where every parachutist is a club member. Parachute centres in Ireland conducting flights in support of parachute dropping for commercial purposes available to members of the public are required to declare their aircraft operational capabilities to the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) and may only use pilots holding a Commercial Pilot Licence. Parachute centres where all the parachutists are members of a club and any profits stay within the organisation, may choose to operate their aircraft according to the rules for non-commercial flights (i.e. private flights). In this case the parachute centre (club) is not required to declare their aircraft operational capabilities to the IAA.

3. Aircraft Operations

European Aviation Regulations for aircraft operations regard the transport of parachutists as a specialist operation (SPO). This means that parachutists (including novice parachutists) are considered to be participants in the operation rather than passengers in the aircraft. Parachutists are considered to be '**task specialists**' when they are being transported in an aircraft for the purpose of a parachute jump. The aircraft operator must assign the duties to be performed on the ground, on board and from the aircraft to each task specialist. The 'Task Specialist' is required to have specific knowledge of those duties. This is also the case when two parachutists jump using the same parachute equipment (normally referred to as a tandem jump). The EU regulations also allow aircraft operating in support of parachute dropping to use the floor of the aircraft as a seat. This is a higher level of risk than normally allowed for passengers in an aircraft on a private or commercial flight where a seat and a seatbelt must be provided. This higher level of risk assumes that the Task Specialist is aware and accepts a lower level of safety as part of their activity. The aircraft operator and the Pilot in Command are responsible to ensure that Task Specialists are appropriately briefed and understand their role in the aircraft operation and any associated risks, particularly in the event of an on-board emergency or an emergency landing.

4. Airspace and Landing Areas

The Pilot in Command of the aircraft used to transport parachutists is responsible for ensuring that the flight is compliant with the Rules of the Air and that all appropriate air traffic control clearances are obtained. This includes ensuring that the airspace that the parachutist intends to jump through is clear of other air traffic. The landing area designated by the parachute centre for the parachutist to land on is usually known as the Drop Zone (DZ). It is the responsibility of the parachute centre to ensure the safety of the DZ according to best industry practices. The DZ is not regulated by the IAA.

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5. Technical Standards for Parachutists and their Equipment

There are no technical standards published in European Aviation Regulations for parachutists or their equipment. This means that sport parachute jumping (i.e. the actual parachute jump and the parachute equipment) is not regulated by the IAA. Parachute centres generally adopt the best practices and parachutist qualification standards recommended by organisations like the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI), the United States Parachute Association (USPA), the Canadian Sport Parachuting Association, the British Parachute Association (BPA) or the Parachute Association of Ireland (PAI). Novice parachutists usually complete a formal training course at an organisation that has equivalent training programs to these organisations or another best practice industry standard. Parachute equipment will normally have technical standards and operating instructions detailed by the equipment manufacturer. Novice parachutists who want to learn more about technical standards and parachutist qualifications should inquire directly with their parachute centre or from their equipment provider.

6. Summary

Sport parachuting is an adventure sport which has inherent risks to life and limb and these risks should be clearly understood by the participants. Parachute centres providing training and qualifications to parachutists, do so according to their own internal safety procedures. This training and the associated parachutist qualifications are not regulated by civil aviation regulations and are not audited, approved or accepted by the IAA.

Aircraft operations are subject to European Aviation Regulations. The aircraft operator and the Pilot in Command must ensure that the aircraft is operated according to the appropriate rules as applicable to the operation. Aircraft operations are either commercial or non-commercial. The safety levels are based on a risk hierarchy ranging from operations with fare-paying parachutists which require the highest level of safety to non-commercial operations which require a proportionate lower level of safety. In both cases it is the operator's and Pilot in Command's responsibility to adhere to the applicable aircraft operating rules. Operators who operate parachute dropping flights on a commercial basis are required to undergo routine audits of the aircraft operation by the IAA.

Parachute jumping and the manufacture or serviceability of parachute equipment is not regulated by the IAA. This is without prejudice to any other Irish or European regulations which may apply to organisations or clubs providing services and or equipment to their members or members of the public. Parachutists are advised to seek independent advice if they have any doubts about their responsibilities or the responsibilities of others involved in their parachuting activity.

Explanatory Note

The IAA is the Agency designated by the State for oversight of aircraft operations. European Commission aviation regulations have recently become applicable in the areas of aircraft operations and the Rules of the Air. These rules include provisions for aircraft operations in support of parachute dropping, but specifically do not include any provisions for parachutists or their equipment. For the purpose of these regulations, persons that are carried on a flight listed as a specialised operation, e.g. on a parachute flight, are considered to be task specialists.

This notice is to inform parachutists that their parachuting activity is under their own responsibility and, or the responsibility of the parachute centre providing them goods and services as applicable.