



ALLEN SILVER
COLUMNS / ASK ALLEN

Let me start by wishing everyone a happy holiday season!

Q: ARE OLD HABITS hard to break?

A: RECENTLY I RECEIVED another parachute that the owner complained was uncomfortable to wear. When I opened it the person who had previously packed it hadn't seemed to pay much attention to the packing manual. This parachute would have opened, but he had not packed it according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Packing according to the manufacturer's instructions is important. Doing so usually results in the most comfortable repack for you and can increase the life expectancy of your life preserver.

Squirring around in the cockpit trying to get more comfortable can also be dangerous. You not only need to keep an eye on what's going on inside your aircraft, but also you must be aware of the surroundings outside your cockpit. The aircraft that is about to collide with you was not seen in time because you were trying to get more comfortable.

I've mentioned this before, but you need to take control of who is packing your parachute. Every rigger I know has access to a computer, and many, like me, have large libraries of packing manuals. The older the rigger usually means the larger the library. I call this period in time BC (before computers). Gray hair can also be a sign of an old rigger or the typewriter in the office. I have to admit I have both.

But, is that enough? Make sure the rigger has the most current edition. The computer edition that each manufacturer has online should be the most current and reliable. Hopefully, your rigger knows how to open it up. Just having the correct material doesn't mean he or she uses it or knows what's inside.

Here I go dating myself again, but how many of you remember the old television commercial about Charlie Tuna? Charlie thought if he swam with first-class tuna he'd become one. The same applies to your rigger. Simply having the proper packing instructions and service manuals nearby doesn't make your rigger a first-class rigger.

Your rigger needs to actually open the book or computer version and use it to make certain your parachute has been packed correctly and to ensure your comfort.

Do your homework ahead of time when choosing your rigger. Just like preflighting your aircraft, doing it before your flight is always best. In an actual emergency you'll get to see what's inside your container, and hopefully you'll be able to take comfort that the rigger you chose to pack your expensive life preserver has done the best job he or she can. This is not the time to have any doubts and certainly not the time to hesitate making your egress. *Hesitating even for a second could cost you more than time.* You should know that delays have cost pilots their lives. On some sky-diving shirts I've seen this saying: "He who hesitates shall inherit the earth." I hope that those precious seconds are on your side. Did some of you recognize that the above quote was a takeoff on a more famous bible verse? For those of you who still think it's a bible verse, you can look up Matthew 5:5.

Please feel free to call or e-mail me with your questions before they become costly problems. I can be reached at allen@silverparachutes.com or 510-785-7070 Monday-Thursday (PST). Happy holidays and happy New Year. Fly safely and keep the questions coming. **IAC**

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