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 CHIEF COUNSEL  
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To: Department of Transportation  
 Federal Aviation Administration  
 9-NPRM-CMTS@faa.gov

From : Mike Johnston  
 Master Parachute Rigger, former DPRE, former USPA Director of Safety  
 and Training,  
 and current General Manager of Skydive DeLand, Inc.

Ref: Docket No. FAA-1999-5483; Notice No. 99-03  
 NPRM 14 CFR Parts 65, 91, 105, 119

The updating of the FAA Regulations concerning Parachute Jumping Operations is important for the Regulations to keep pace with the advancement and evolution of this aeronautical activity. While it is long overdue, I applaud these efforts and generally support them. My specific comments on some of the details follow.

Part 105.43

\*\*\*I request that this FAR revision include extending the reserve parachute inspection cycle specified in Part 105.43 from the current 120 days to six months. The six month cycle should be limited to the reserve parachute of a dual pack parachute system when its fabric and fibrous materials are 100% synthetic. The cycle should stay at 60 days when the system includes any quantity of natural fabric or fibrous material. [Note: Current Part 105 language lists only two components (canopy and harness) of the seven major parachute components (harness, container, activation device, risers, canopy, deployment device, and pilot chute) and includes the word "shroud," which is not part of any parachute system but is incorrectly used in some circles as a synonym for canopy. This language should be corrected in any event.] Most other countries throughout the world and the U.S. Military have used six month inspection cycles for up to ten years with no degradation of safety. The routine external inspection of the parachute system by the user and by fellow skydivers helps to ensure that the parachute retains its airworthiness. This change will put the U.S. in harmony with the most widely accepted standards recognized through out the world.

Part 65.125

\*\*\*I oppose the change in language in Part 65.125 concerning the supervisory privileges of a certificated senior or master parachute rigger. The proposed change does not

really change anything as these privileges are granted in the current regulation. I believe there is no inconsistency in the regulations. Part 105 lists the packing requirement and Part 65 defines how that requirement can be met. Under the proposed new regulation, non-certificated packers would need to be under the supervision of a certificated rigger the same as the current regulations require. There is little benefit to be derived by adding to Part 65, a reference to Part 105.43 and adding additional language to Part 105 to say that a certificated rigger can perform the supervisory privileges granted in the existing Part 65. With no benefit and no effective change there should be no addition of extra and redundant verbiage.

Part 105.21

\*\*\*I oppose changing Part 105.21 to eliminate the 4-day requirement to apply for a Certificate of Authorization. If the application can be processed faster, it can and should be. Retaining the 4-day requirement should not effect processing time. Without this provision, it is easier for field offices to apply the 30-day requirement used for applications for Certificates of Waiver. Removing the 4-day requirement has the potential to slow down and delay a relatively simple application to the point of denying activities currently taking place.

Part 105.23

\*\*\*Part 105.23 currently requires prior approval from airport management for parachute landings on an airport without a control tower. I know of no other aeronautical activity requiring prior approval from airport management to land at an airport without a control tower. It seems parachutists are singled out for more restrictive treatment. Without an overriding justification, this inequity should be removed from Part 105.

Part 105.27

\*\*\*Part 105.27 proposes to add accident reporting responsibility to the parachutists involved and to the drop zone owner or operator. I have understood that it is an FAA regulation to report all aviation related fatalities and so the reporting of skydiving fatalities is required now. It has been my experience that local law enforcement officials usually notify the FAA when a fatality has occurred and that the FAA receives information on nearly all skydiving fatalities. This change to Part 105 should recognize this practice and included law enforcement officials in the possible sources of notification. I also question the requirement to include a requirement to report "serious" injuries. A strict interpretation of this regulation could

include  
sunburn and sports type  
injuries such as pulled muscles and result in a flood of reports to FAA  
field offices. These  
reports would show that parachute packing seldom contributes to injuries.  
USPA data should  
show that about 2000 skydiving injuries requiring professional medical  
attention occur each year  
involving nearly every skydiving center, far more than the estimated 44 per  
year in the NPRM.  
Often, a "serious injury" is so minor that the parachutist exhibits no  
obvious symptoms  
observable by a drop zone operator or pilot and does not notify them when  
treatment is sought at  
some point in the future. This proposal should either eliminate or re-  
define  
the term "serious  
injury." The claim that all of the skydiving fatalities from 1991 to 1996  
where the result of  
equipment failure is surprising. The record should show that nearly all  
where the result of  
jumper error or misjudgment.

Part 105.45

\*\*\*USPA does not currently issue an "expert" parachute license, nor does  
any  
other organization  
in the U.S. While the intent is sound, this requirement needs some work.

Part 105.49

\*\*\*I whole-heartedly support the proposed change to Part 105.49.

Please consider these comments. I am available for further discussion at  
904-738-3539.



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