

THE SENTINEL



OFFICIAL SAFETY NEWSLETTER OF CIVIL AIR PATROL

Ballistic Parachute Awareness

Would you know what to do if you or a member of your Ground Team discovered an unfired rocket-deployed emergency parachute system (sometimes called a **ballistic parachute**) at the scene of an aircraft accident? These devices are intended to save lives but, they also have the potential to cause injury or even death to search and rescue and first responder personnel.

While there are several manufacturers of ballistic parachute systems on the market, equipment manufactured by Ballistic Recovery Systems (BRS) is the most prevalent system found in the industry. In addition to BRS ballistic parachute, there are several other brands: Pioneer, Second Chantz, Advanced Ballistic Systems, Galaxy, and GQ Security.



The BRS whole aircraft recovery system is intended as an option for pilots that have concluded that a safe landing may be difficult, if not impossible. However, in certain instances, there may have been no opportunity to deploy the system prior to impact. In those cases where the impact was notably violent,

it is quite likely the system will have fired as a result of airframe breakup or distortion. This leaves the final scenario; one in which the parachute system has not been activated due to crash forces, and the system's rocket is still very much alive and capable of being fired.

The rocket motors are ignited by pulling an activation handle in the cockpit. They then accel-

erate to over 100 mph in the first tenth of a second after ignition. While the total firing period is only one second, someone in the path of an escaping rocket could be seriously injured or killed. These are powerful rockets (about 1½-2 inches diameter and 8-10 inches long) that work very efficiently. The photo below is a test of a Cirrus system showing the 55 pound parachute pack



being pulled by the rocket motor. This is a fraction of a second after ignition. The danger to safety personnel may now be more obvious.

A rescue worker who disregards the position of the ballistic parachute system, or who moves the aircraft without determining the existence of a ballistic parachute system may put him or herself in considerable jeopardy. BRS has coordinated with the NTSB, FAA and many rescue organizations on how to disarm these systems. **However, BRS acknowledges that disabling a system at an accident site can be dangerous and might be best left to the experts. For accident responders that agree with this viewpoint, BRS recommends contacting a local bomb squad to accomplish this procedure.**

A BRS document that is intended to provide information to emergency personnel, can be viewed at: <http://brsparachutes.com/1st%20responder/InstPersonnel.pdf>. BRS has also made available a PowerPoint presentation on *Accident Scene Safety*, which can be viewed or downloaded at: http://faa.gov/arp/safety/accident_safety_scene_brs.ppt.



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Put ICE In Your Cell Phone

Cell phones are an indispensable lifeline at times of crisis. But for first responders making life-and-death decisions, the cell phone poses a conundrum: Which of the numbers stored in its electronic address book should they call to reach a casualty's next of kin? Now a simple initiative, conceived by a paramedic in Britain, has gained momentum on both sides of the Atlantic to try to solve this problem. Cell phone users are being urged to put the acronym ICE -- "in case of emergency" -- before the names of the people they want to designate as next of kin in their cell phone address book, creating entries such as:
ICE - Kathy (wife) or ICE - John (father).

Paramedics, police and firefighters often waste valuable time trying to figure out which name in a cell phone to call when disaster strikes. They must look through wallets for clues, or scroll through cell phone address books and guess. Many people identify their spouse by first name in their cell phone, making them indistinguishable from other entries. Not only does having an ICE entry help emergency workers identify a responsible party when they come upon an unconscious person, it can also help identify the owner of a lost cell phone.

Sporty's Safety Quiz

If you're a member of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), there's a great resource in the Members Section. It's Sporty's Safety Quiz, which gives you a quick, easy and interactive way to continually assess and expand your flying knowledge from the privacy of your own personal computer. You can find the latest quiz at: <http://www.aopa.org/asf/asfquiz/quizzes.cfm?SA=Quizzes&QuizId=Feature>. The list of previous quizzes is extensive. Every time you take one of the safety quizzes, you'll have a chance to win a **Sporty's Air-Scan V Aviation Radio/Scanner**. A new quiz is posted bi-weekly, so go back often to test your knowledge (and good luck winning a scanner)!



What's your OPERATION CAPSAFE suggestion?

Driving Safely This Winter



- **Slow Down!** Drive according to road and weather conditions. Remember, the posted speed limits are for dry pavement.
- **Clear snow and ice** from all windows and lights - even the hood and roof - before driving.
- **Leave plenty of room for stopping** and brake early. It takes more time to stop when roads are wet or icy.
- **Know current road conditions** before driving.
- **Check local news** for weather/traffic reports.
- **Watch electronic highway signs** for info.
- **Leave room for maintenance vehicles and plows** - stay at least 15 car lengths (200 feet) back and don't pass on the right.
- **Watch for icy surfaces on bridges**, even when the road seems to be in good condition.
- **Look farther ahead in traffic.** Actions by other drivers will alert you to problems and give you extra seconds to react.
- **Trucks take longer to stop**, so don't cut in front of them.
- **Don't use your cruise control** or overdrive when it's freezing (or colder). Even roads that appear clear can have isolated slippery spots and the short touch of your brakes to deactivate cruise control can cause you to lose control of your vehicle. With overdrive, as you encounter a hill your vehicle automatically accelerates or downshifts, which can cause loss of traction.
- **Don't get overconfident with four-wheel drive.** Four-wheel drive helps you get going quicker but it won't help you stop any faster.
- **Don't pump anti-lock brakes.** If your car is equipped with anti-lock brakes, do not pump your brakes. The right way is to "stomp and steer."
- **Adjust to Road Conditions.** The faster your vehicle is going, the more distance it will take to turn, slow, or stop.
- **Allow extra time.** Give yourself extra time to reach your destination when roads may be slick. Consider delaying your trip.
- **Drive with your headlights on.**
- If at all possible, **do not drive when the roads are icy.**