



The Light Division Parachute Display Team,
Sir John Moore Barracks,
Andover Road North, Winchester,
Hampshire SO22 6NQ.
Telephone: (0962) 885522 Ext 4283

**TRAIL
BLAZERS**

JNCSO
British Parachute Association
Kimberley House
LEICESTER
LE1 4SG

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SAFETY INFORMATION - CONTACT RETRACTABLE BRIDLE LINE

We came across a problem this weekend with our retractable bridle lines which I thought you might care to hear about. In our case it resulted only in the loss of a pilot chute but it could have been more serious.

The Bridle line had broken about 6 inches from the attachment point inside the canopy and there was friction damage in two distinct areas:

1. Along the first 9 inches or so of the bridle line.
2. The anchorage point inside the canopy.

Inspection of our other 11 Contact canopies revealed similar damage, although to a much lesser extent, on all of them. The damage was clearly long term over at least 100 jumps and should easily be picked up on even a cursory check. The problem is that part of the system is contained within the canopy itself all the time, even when the bridle line is withdrawn during packing- it requires an effort on the part of the jumper to withdraw the bridle line anchorage from the canopy to inspect it.

I have decided to dispense with the retractable system except for competition CRW, and to use the conventional system for normal training, and am in the process of converting all my canopies. As I say, it appears to be a long term problem which should be picked up on routine inspection long before it becomes critical, but if it had broken before line stretch was achieved

Yours sincerely

R ELLIS
Sergeant
Team Commander