



## Safety Line

By Mark Bellingan, D628

Freefly incident report:

The purpose of this short article is to share one particular incident report and to highlight the importance of checks, systems and the small stuff. Look after the small stuff and the big stuff will, generally, look after itself.

On a regular day, two super-current and experienced skydivers arranged a freefly skydive. Both skydivers have a couple of sets of gear and are multi-skilled.

Skydiver A has over 12000 skydives and is super-current, doing 1000 plus skydives a year. He would be the coach in the proposed skydive. Getting ready, he was in a rush and opted for his second set of gear as the other was already set up for camera and he was on a back-to-back load. The audible in the second helmet had, at some time earlier, indicated that the battery was in need of replacement as it was warning/ beeping at a higher altitude than it was set for, but he opted to use it anyway, thinking it should be OK for one more jump!.

Skydiver B is just short of 2000 skydives and is also super-current having done almost 1000 skydives in the last year. Skydiver B also used his second set of gear and for whatever reason had forgotten or neglected to turn his second audible on at the time that he got his gear ready for the day and didn't check it's operation on the way up to altitude

Prior to exit, skydiver A told skydiver B that his audible had turned off and that they would rely on B's audible and that B should give a clear indication at the 5000ft pre-set warning altitude. B verbally confirmed this with A.

The skydive was of a freefly nature and required some very hard flying which presented some difficulty in reading altimeters so they both, independently of each other, decided to trust their audibles and use each other as backup. Just prior to exit, this was reduced to one audible.

The skydive was uneventful for the first half but started to get a bit messy in the second half which required more concentration and input...

At 2000ft, skydiver A's internal clock alerted him to the fact that this had been going on too long and so he looked at the ground behind skydiver B, realized he was low, flattened out and deployed.

Skydiver B observed the deployment, flattened out and deployed his main parachute, approximately one second later. His parachute inflated fully, he turned 90 degrees and checked his altimeter. It read 100ft.

Both these skydivers are extremely current and are consistently open at a safe altitude on every jump as indicated on their digital/ audible altimeters. Going low is not an option for them.

It is noted that both skydivers did not have an automatic activation device (AAD). Safety & Training highly recommends the use of an AAD for all skydivers.

- Don't think that this could not happen to you.
- Have a pre-jump and gear check system that you stick to.
- Turn all your electronic gear on at the same time – AAD, altimeter, audible etc.
- Do not try and milk the last milliamp out of the batteries.
- If something changes re-evaluate the whole dive plan.



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