

Security of Skydiving Operations

Facility

Skydive operators should take steps to secure access to their facilities and aircraft, both during operations and periods of inactivity.

- **Markers**—Physical markers such as fencing, snow fences, and even “do-not-cross” tape can be employed to mark areas of restricted access, such as the flight line, maintenance area, fueling area, and aircraft parking/hangar area.
- **Signs**—Signs advising of restricted access can be erected along the barriers and in proximity to the flight line, maintenance area, fueling area, and aircraft parking/hangar area.
- **Lighting**—Outdoor lighting can be strategically placed to illuminate secure areas.
- **Aircraft Security**—Aircraft should be locked and/or disabled to prevent theft or unauthorized use. If hangared, the hangar should be locked. If parked on a ramp, after-market door locks, prop locks, or throttle locks should be used. When necessary for aircraft start, auxiliary power units and/or “start carts” should be stored in secured and locked area.
- **Airport Observation**—Skydive staff and regular customers, because they are often on the airport during hours when other aviation businesses are closed (evenings and weekends), can function as a sort of airport “neighborhood watch” program. Staff and customers should be encouraged to report any suspicious activity.

Operations

Skydive operators should also take steps to minimize or eliminate the potential for someone to hijack an aircraft or make an unauthorized jump into a security-sensitive area.

- **Observers**—Observers should be allowed on the flight deck or next to the pilot only with the utmost precaution. The operator should ensure that the observer has a bona fide purpose, such as first-jump candidate, media, etc. Even so, credentials should be checked to ensure validity. Operators should be suspicious of pilots who request right seat time especially if they are unknown and/or their flight experience is low.
- **Boarding verification**—Operators should institute practices to ensure that staff first validates each person who boards the aircraft. Visiting skydivers who are unknown to staff should have their skydiving credentials fully verified prior to boarding. Visiting skydivers, first-jump students, and novices should be subjected to gear checks designed to also detect whether a weapon is being carried.
- **Unauthorized Exits**—Jump pilots should be familiar with any nearby security-sensitive areas, and the aircraft should be maneuvered to avoid those areas. The flight path should eliminate the potential for anyone to exit the aircraft with the intention of landing near such an area.
- **Pilot Assistance**—Operators should consider always stationing near the pilot a staff person who can assist the pilot if necessary. Exit order should be employed that ensure a staff member is the last skydiver to exit; an unknown, visiting skydiver should not be allowed to exit last.
- **Pilot Observation**—Jump pilots are in an excellent position to observe activity on and around the airport, including sensitive facilities in proximity to the airport. When flying, jump pilots should be prepared to immediately report suspicious activity to ATC; or call law enforcement when on the ground.