USPA Drop Zone Compliance and Safety Inspection Checklist

Purpose of the Checklist

This comprehensive checklist is designed to evaluate a drop zone's alignment with United States Parachute Association (USPA) regulations, including the Basic Safety Requirements (BSRs), FAA Part 105, and policies outlined in the SIM, IRM, S&TA Handbook, Governance Manual, and Safety Management System (SMS) framework. Some checklist items also reflect recognized industry best practices that, while not explicitly documented in USPA publications, support enhanced safety and operational consistency.

While the checklist can serve as a tool to verify basic compliance, it is intended primarily as a framework for thoughtful review and ongoing improvement. Rather than simply marking items as complete or incomplete, drop zone owners and managers are encouraged to use each question as a prompt to examine how that element is currently handled at their location, assess whether existing procedures are effective, and identify opportunities to strengthen safety culture and operational quality.

Drop zone owners and operators may use this tool independently for internal self-assessments or may request direct support from USPA. Upon request, a USPA representative will assist with the inspection process and provide a collaborative review of the operation. This review includes a summary of observed strengths as well as observations on areas where further development or refinement may be beneficial. Constructive recommendations will be offered where applicable, with the goal of helping each drop zone achieve the highest standards of safety, training, and professionalism.

1. General Compliance and Membership

☐ Is the DZ's written safety policy documented and communicated to all personnel?

Comments: _____

☐ Is there visible evidence of management's commitment to safety?

Comments: _____

☐ Is the drop zone a current USPA Group Member?

Comments: _____

☐ Has the Group Member Pledge been signed and submitted?

Comments: _____

☐ Does the DZ require USPA membership for all self-supervising U.S. jumpers?

Comments: _____

☐ Are Group Membership documents (waiver, aircraft forms, etc.) complete and on file with USPA HQ?

Comments: _____

2. Instructional Program

☐ Are all instructors and coaches current USPA rating holders?

Comments: _____

☐ Are all coaches assigned a supervising instructor while they perform their duties?

Comments: _____

☐ Is there a tracking system in place to track all rating holders' currency?

Comments: _____

☐ Do all tandem instructors complete bi-annual drills on tandem emergency procedures and how is this tracked?

Comments: _____

☐ Are there current copies of the Instructional Rating Manual (IRM) accessible at the dropzone and where?

Comments: _____

☐ Are there current copies of the Skydivers Information Manual (SIM) accessible at the dropzone and where?

Comments: _____

☐ Is the Integrated Student Program (ISP) or syllabus being used?

Comments: _____

☐ Are license exams administered according to SIM guidelines?

Comments: _____

☐ Is the SIM or structured student program followed for all student training and progression?

Comments: _____

☐ Do all student and solo A-license jumps meet minimum deployment altitudes (3,000 ft AGL)?

Comments: _____

☐ Do students use required gear such as a helmet, AAD, RSL, altimeter, appropriate container and canopies?

Comments: _____

☐ Do students use some form of flight planner before every jump, and is it documented?

Comments: _____

☐ Do students practice emergency procedures at the start of every jumping day?

Comments: _____

3. Safety & Training Advisor (S&TA) Program

☐ Is at least one S&TA appointed at this DZ and is their appointment current?

Comments: _____

☐ Are all S&TAs publicly posted with contact information available?

Comments: _____

☐ Have all S&TAs attended a recent Regional Director Annual Meeting?

Comments: _____

☐ Have all S&TAs completed the S&TA training modules within the last 3 years?

Comments: _____

☐ Is the S&TA performing incident investigations and submitting reports, or delegating that responsibility to a qualified person and following up to ensure the reports are being filed?

Comments: _____

☐ Is the S&TA verifying D-license and rating renewals as required?

Comments: _____

4. Emergency Preparedness and Incident Management

☐ Is there a documented and practiced incident reporting system in place locally?

Comments: _____

☐ Are there anonymous options for reporting incidents and safety concerns locally?

Comments: _____

☐ Is there a written plan for responding to the following incidents sicarios:
- ☐ Aircraft Accidents
- ☐ In-Air Emergencies
- ☐ Fatalities or serious injuries response plan
- ☐ Recovery plan for off airport landings
- ☐ Tree landing jumper retrieval plan
- ☐ Water landing jumper retrieval plan

Comments: _____

☐ Is there a copy of the USPA Emergency Preparedness Kit available?

Comments: _____

☐ Are staff trained in the incident response plan, and do regular rehearsals take place?

Comments: _____

☐ Are medical and first aid kits regularly checked for expired and/or missing items and replenished as necessary?

Comments: _____

☐ Are incident reports submitted to USPA?

Comments: _____

☐ Are records of prior incidents and follow-up actions available for local reports?
       Reviewing previous incidents ensures lessons learned are retained and shared.

Comments: _____

☐ Is there an established plan to preserve equipment appropriately after incidents for investigation?

Comments: _____

5. Discipline Specific Operations

☐ Are procedures for extraordinary jumps (night, water, high-altitude) in place?

Comments: _____

☐ Do jumpers who participate in high-risk activities (e.g., high-performance landings, wingsuit, high altitude, movement) receive additional pre-jump risk reviews or briefings?

Comments: _____

☐ Does the drop zone have established briefings for low-experience or solo movement jumpers, such as those participating in freefly, tracking, or angle jumps?

Comments: _____

> ➢ **Demonstration Jumps**

☐ Are exhibition jumps conducted under the current PRO rating and FAA approval?

Comments: _____

☐ Are all demo documentation and protocols been followed?

Comments: _____

> ➢ **Wingsuit Jumps**

☐ Are wingsuit jumps monitored by someone assigned by dropzone management?

Comments: _____

☐ Are cutaway procedures practiced with wingsuit-specific considerations, such as flat spins and instability recovery drills?

Comments: _____

☐ Are AAD settings reviewed for compatibility with wingsuit jumps?

Comments: _____

➢ High-Performance Landings

☐ Are high-performance canopy pilots required to declare landing intentions or use designated areas?
Designated landing zones help separate traffic and reduce the risk of collisions.

Comments: _____

☐ Is there a physical or time-based separation for high-performance landing approaches versus jumpers flying a standard landing pattern?

Comments: _____

☐ Is coaching, training or a briefing required for those conducting pond swoops or other HP maneuvers?

Comments: _____

☐ Are the high-performance landing areas marked and monitored?

Comments: _____

☐ Are jumpers with high wing loadings monitored for risk mitigation practices?

Comments: _____

☐ Are AAD settings reviewed for compatibility with high-performance landings?

Comments: _____

☐ Have high-risk canopy operations been evaluated and mitigated through SMS hazard analysis?

Comments: _____

6. Aircraft, Equipment, and Maintenance

☐ Is the aircraft documentation current such as the registration, airworthiness, logbooks?

Comments: _____

☐ Do pilots document pre-flight inspections and use checklists before each flight?

Comments: _____

☐ Is emergency equipment present (fire extinguisher, ELT, first aid kit)?

Comments: _____

☐ Is a thorough pre-flight inspection of the aircraft accomplished, including engine run-up, prior to the first flight each day?

Comments: _____

☐ Are pilots properly rated, current, and familiar with DZ operations?

Comments: _____

☐ Does each aircraft have a useable seat belt for each of the maximum number of skydivers?

Comments: _____

☐ Is there a procedure for pilots to record maintenance discrepancies?

Comments: _____

☐ Is the repack cycle on emergency bailout rigs compliant and documented?

Comments: _____

7. Tandem Operations
☐ Are all tandem instructors USPA-rated?

Comments: _____

☐ Do tandem instructors hold a valid medical certificate?

Comments: _____

☐ Is the tandem instructor-student briefing thorough and FAR 105.45 compliant?

Comments: _____

☐ Are all tandem instructor briefing each of their students individually?

Comments: _____

8. Currency and Emergency Procedure Training

☐ Are there currency training guidelines readily available?

Comments: _____

☐ Are there training aids to support effective currency and emergency procedure training?

Comments: _____

☐ Are canopy control checks and slider management techniques emphasized in canopy courses and currency training?

Comments: _____

☐ Does the DZ provide currency training on emergency procedures, which include spinning and diving line twists and toggle fires?

Comments: _____

☐ Does the DZ provide emergency procedure training that includes running at least one scenario to landing and introducing scenarios that require rehearsing low-altitude canopy skills?

Comments: _____

☐ Does currency training include 'Stay Alive – Practice Five' CEP training?

Comments: _____

☐ Does each canopy pilot receive annual emergency training?

Comments: _____

9. Drop Zone General Operations

☐ Does the manifest staff check ID for all jumpers checking in for the first time?

Comments: _____

☐ Does the manifest staff check logbooks and verify currency for all jumpers checking in for the first time?

Comments: _____

☐ Are new jumpers equipment checked for FAA compliance?

Comments: _____

☐ Does manifest staff check each waiver to ensure they were correctly completed?

Comments: _____

☐ Are there written checklists for DZ orientation briefings?

Comments: _____

☐ Are mutual gear checks being performed in the loading area with all jumpers?

Comments: _____

☐ Are landing areas clearly marked, obstacle-free, and compliant with license holder standards?

Comments: _____

☐ Is spectator access to the landing and aircraft boarding/taxi areas controlled by a fence, rail, rope barrier or similar method?

Comments: _____

☐ Are manifest logs maintained accurately with jump and load data?

Comments: _____

☐ Do jump participants conduct pre-jump briefings or dirt dives for all jumpers (students, tandems, experienced)?

Comments: _____

☐ Is a rigger available and supervising all packers in each packing area?

Comments: _____

☐ Is the rigging loft organized, and are the tools maintained?

Comments: _____

☐ Is there an updated master log of all drop zone owned equipment that includes tracking repack cycle dates?

Comments: _____

☐Are manned ground-to-air communications present during skydiving operations?

Comments: _____

☐ Do skydivers observe the VFR cloud clearance and visibility requirements of FAR 105.17?

Comments: _____

☐ Is there a record of ground crew briefings, orientations or training for loaders and fuelers?

Comments: _____

☐ Do boarding procedures prevent movement in the vicinity of turning propellers/rotor blades?

Comments: _____

☐ Has the drop zone filed the annual ATC Notification or ATC Authorization in accordance with Part 105.25(c)?

Comments: _____

☐ Does the drop zone operate under a Letter of Agreement (LOA) with the local ATC Facility?

Comments: _____

☐ Is a correct and valid Notice to Airman (NOTAM) either permanently in place (FDC NOTAM) or filed prior to skydiving activity (NOTAM D)?

Comments: _____

10. Documentation and Record Keeping

☐ Are S&TA waivers documented locally and filed with USPA?

Comments: _____

- ☐ Are onsite rigger credentials displayed in an appropriate area?

Comments: _____

☐ Are license and rating records maintained and available for inspection?

Comments: _____

☐ Is there a current Flight Operations Handbook?

Comments: _____

☐ Are corrective actions documented, tracked, and verified for closure?

Comments: _____

☐ Are internal safety audits conducted and reviewed regularly?

Comments: _____

11. Weather

☐ Is weather information checked frequently and shared with jump staff, or posted and updated when necessary?

Comments: _____

☐ Are weather checks and go/no-go procedures documented and practiced daily?

Comments: _____

Addition

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