



April 14, 2020

To: Parachute Riggers, Manufacturers, and Owners of Parachute Systems

Re: COVID-19 procedures for parachute systems and materials

This memo is for personnel working with parachute systems, components, and materials, as well as users of such systems. Since the onset of the COVID-19 (officially SARS-CoV-2) coronavirus pandemic, it is understandable that riggers and manufacturers are increasingly using disinfectant products in their workspaces. Further, parachute equipment and materials may be suspected of exposure to the coronavirus.

Based on public information from well-respected sources, the following recommendations apply when working with parachute systems and materials:

- 1. To prevent damage and degradation, do not use cleaning solutions, disinfectants, or sanitizers on parachute systems and materials.**
2. When cleaning and disinfecting work surfaces, take care to isolate parachutes systems and materials from any cleaning solutions, disinfectants, and sanitizers. Further, ANY disinfectant that is applied to hard surfaces that are expected to come into contact with parachute textiles should be treated to prevent residue contamination. An example would be to follow the recommended disinfectant treatment with a water rinse and wipe down to remove any remaining residue. This is especially important for using disinfectants that contain chemicals such as bleach and hydrogen peroxide that are known to severely damage textiles, even in small quantities. Examples of hard surfaces that would require residue removal after disinfecting are pack tables, sewing machines and packing tools.
3. Assume all parachute systems and materials handled by or stored near people have been exposed to COVID-19. Store away from people for 3 days to reduce the likelihood of viable virus/RNA but consider that they may still be contaminated and take appropriate precautions.
4. Observe frequent “hand hygiene” and other guidelines from respected organizations such as the CDC.

These recommendations are based on the following sources and other statements from industry experts.

Recently, Bourdon Forge, a well-known manufacturer of parachute hardware, released a letter to its customers. Among other things, it stated:

Product Awareness Note: Due to the nature of our plated products (cadmium and zinc), including the packaging materials such as cardboard, wood & barrels, the exposure to any moisture, humidity, water, liquids, disinfectants containing bleach or chlorinated compounds shall not be used. The use of any fluids will cause an abnormal attack on these cadmium or zinc parts by setting free in the presence of moisture, formic-acid, butyric acid, etc. **Please make this awareness known to your employees when handling our products.**

Further, the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command released a memo stating

...The Aerial Delivery Engineering Support Team (ADEST) does not authorize the exposure of any of its textiles to cleaning, disinfecting and/or sanitizing chemicals that may be used in an effort to limit the spread of COVID-19, other viruses or microbes. Currently, there are no approved procedures of these types that have been tested, evaluated, and demonstrated as safe for use on critical safety materials such as parachute textiles.

They go on to state:

If any cleaning, disinfecting or sanitizing processes are undertaken, all textiles shall be kept isolated and/or covered to protect from exposure to the chemical treatment.

While these memos were written to address specific communities, their concerns apply to all parachute riggers, manufacturers, and owners of parachute systems.

According to the CDC (US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person. They go on to say:

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. This is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads, but we are still learning more about this virus. CDC recommends people practice frequent "hand hygiene," which is either washing hands with soap or water or using an alcohol-based hand rub. CDC also recommends routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces.

According to a recent study from National Institutes of Health, CDC, UCLA and Princeton University scientists in The New England Journal of Medicine:

The scientists found that severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) was detectable in aerosols for up to three hours, up to four hours on copper, up to 24 hours on cardboard and **up to two to three days on plastic and stainless steel.**

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