

WHAT IS A DROPZONE SAFETY OFFICER AND WHY SHOULD YOU KNOW YOURS?

*Written of behalf of the CSPA Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) Committee
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Every Canadian dropzone operating under the Canadian Sport Parachuting Association (CSPA) appoints a Dropzone Safety Officer (DZSO). A role defined in CSPA PIM 1.22 as the person responsible for promoting, educating, and enforcing safety in collaboration with the Dropzone Owner/Operator (DZO). While the title may sound formal, the DZSO is one of the most important resources available to every skydiver, coach, and instructor at the DZ.

What Does a DZSO Do?

The DZSO's work blends education, oversight, and safety management. They help prevent issues before they occur and respond effectively when incidents happen.

➤ **AIM Reporting and Safety Analysis**

The DZSO investigates Accidents, Incidents, and Malfunctions, identifies contributing factors, recommends corrective actions, and submits AIM reports within 10 days. This supports the national Safety Management System (SMS) and strengthens learning across the community.

➤ **Corrective Action & Standards**

Working with the DZO, the DZSO ensures operations align with the CSPA Skills Grid, Basic Safety Rules (BSRs), and Technical Recommendations. Their focus is education, accountability, and safe progression.

➤ **Organizing Safety Day**

The DZSO leads the planning and facilitation of Dropzone Safety Day, a key annual event that reinforces best practices, updates members on new procedures, and builds a shared culture of safety.

➤ **Delivering Safety Briefings**

The DZSO organizes Safety Day and delivers essential briefings, including DZ orientations, night jump briefings, water training, and specialized aircraft procedures.

➤ **Emergency Preparedness**

The DZSO educates the community on the DZ Emergency Activation Plan, ensuring that everyone knows how to respond quickly and effectively when seconds matter.

➤ **Verifying Competence and Ratings**

To uphold instructional quality and student safety, the DZSO verifies C3 discipline-specific competence and active CSPA ratings for all coaches and instructors.

Why You Should Get to Know Your DZSO

Your DZSO is more than a safety administrator—they're a resource, an advocate, and a partner in your progression. Here's why every skydiver should take the time to connect with them:

- **They help you grow.** Whether you're working toward a new CoP, exploring a new discipline, or refining your skills, the DZSO can guide you toward safe, structured development.
- **They keep the dropzone running smoothly.** Many of the systems that make your DZ safe and efficient exist because the DZSO maintains them.
- **They're your link to national safety standards.** The DZSO ensures your DZ aligns with CSPA's evolving best practices.
- **They're approachable.** The role is built on communication and collaboration. Your questions, concerns, and observations help them do their job better.

A strong relationship between skydivers and their DZSO builds a safer, more informed, and more connected community.