

**BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION LTD**

[www.bpa.org.uk](http://www.bpa.org.uk)

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(This form should not be sent to the British Parachute Association)

**STUDENT TANDEM PARACHUTIST  
DECLARATION OF FITNESS**

I hereby declare that I am physically fit. I do not, and have not, suffered from any of the following conditions, which I understand may lead to a dangerous situation with regard to myself or other persons during parachuting\*/I have had one of the following conditions and have declared full details to the certifying doctor\*:

Epilepsy, fits, severe head injury, recurrent blackouts or giddiness, disease of the brain or nervous system, high blood pressure, heart or lung disease, dislocated shoulder, recurrent weakness or dislocation of any limb, diabetes, mental illness, drug or alcohol addiction.

I further declare that in the event of contracting or suspecting any of the above conditions, or in the event of sickness absence over twenty consecutive days, incapacitating injury or confirmation of pregnancy, I will cease to parachute until I have obtained medical approval. I have read the notes overleaf.

Name in CAPITALS		Date of Birth	Weight
Signature	Date	BPA Number <small>(May be issued on day of Course)</small>	Height
Signature of Witness		Name of Witness in CAPITALS	

(All parachutists require their Declaration Witnessed, for parachutists under 18 years of age, the Witness MUST be the parent or guardian)

.....  
IF YOU HAVE HAD ANY OF THE ABOVE CONDITIONS, OR IF YOU ARE AGED 40 OR MORE, YOU MUST OBTAIN THE DOCTORS CERTIFICATE BELOW BEFORE PARACHUTING. THIS IS NOT N.H.S. WORK AND YOUR DOCTOR MAY CHARGE YOU FOR THIS. A SPECIFIC APPOINTMENT MAY NEED TO BE MADE.  
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**DOCTOR'S CERTIFICATE**

*(A certifying doctor is not stating that a candidate will remain free of injury or other problems during parachuting, but that records, history or appropriate clinical examination have not suggested unacceptable medical risk factors. Level of Skill preferred: NonSpecialist GP, usually with access to patient records or Specialist responsible for care of parachutist.)*

I understand that the applicant wishes to make a Student Tandem parachute descent but has a listed condition/is aged 40 or over\*. I have read the notes overleaf. In my opinion as a doctor without specialist knowledge of parachuting, the applicant is physically and mentally capable of parachuting as a tandem student and is *medically* safe to do so.

..... Signature		(Doctors Stamp)
..... Date of Signature	..... Date of Expiry (see – Validity, over)	
* Delete as applicable		

**NOTES FOR PARACHUTISTS** No persons under the age of 16 are permitted to parachute, or carry out parachute training. Tandem Student parachutists do not have to be particularly fit but there are some medical conditions that can cause problems. As well as the conditions listed overleaf, the following may cause problems to parachutists. If you have ever suffered from any of them you must have your doctors approval before parachuting:

Previous fractures, back strain, arthritis and severe joint sprains. Chronic bronchitis. Asthma. Rheumatic fever. Pneumothorax. Liver or Kidney disease. Anaemia. Thyroid, adrenal or other glandular disorder. Chronic ear or sinus disease. Any condition which requires the regular use of drugs. Regular or recent blood donation.

Blindness is no barrier to Tandem parachuting. However, if you do wear spectacles they should be securely attached while parachuting. Protective goggles should be worn.

**NOTES FOR DOCTORS** Cardiorespiratory fitness is important. Student Tandem parachutists make descents from unpressurised aircraft at heights of 5,500 to 15,000 feet above sea level without supplementary oxygen. At 15,000 feet there is a 40% reduction in available oxygen. A tachycardia of 120 - 160 bpm is common in experienced parachutists and 200 bpm is not unusual in novices. The tachycardia may be present at the same time as relative hypoxia. Ischaemic heart disease, uncontrolled hypertension and cerebrovascular disease are absolute contraindications. Candidates with traumatic tetraplegia may have reduced ventilatory capacity. The examining doctor should be satisfied that any impairment will not cause respiratory embarrassment at altitude. A history of autonomic dysreflexia should be excluded in candidates with spinal injuries above mid-dorsal level. Specialist advice should be sought in cases of doubt.

Student Tandem parachutists are strapped to an experienced instructor throughout the aircraft ride and parachute descent. The instructor and student share a common large parachute but only the instructor can open it or initiate any emergency procedures. Musculoskeletal fitness is not required and even paralysis or partial amputation of limbs is acceptable provided the instructor secures flaccid limbs before the jump. Unstable or dislocatable shoulders are particularly likely to dislocate again while parachuting. This is painful and risks further injury to the joint. During the parachute deployment there is a brisk deceleration, usually about 4g but occasionally up to 15g. Unstable spinal injuries or subluxation may be exacerbated by such deceleration. The landing impact typically involves a variable descent rate equivalent to jumping from a wall 0 - 4 feet high, with a horizontal speed of 0 - 15 mph. Occasionally the landing impact may be considerably greater than this. Pre-existing spinal problems, joint injuries and arthritis can be exacerbated but are far less likely to be aggravated by a tandem jump than by any other form of parachuting, due to the descent and landing being controlled by a very experienced instructor.

Middle ear or sinus disease may cause problems due to the rapid changes in ambient air pressure. The rate of descent in freefall may exceed 10,000 ft/min and under an open canopy 1,000 ft/min.

Neither blindness or deafness constitutes a barrier to Student Tandem parachuting, but the candidate must be capable of appreciating what is happening and of giving informed consent. Stable diabetes with no tendency to hypoglycaemia is acceptable. Epilepsy is not a contraindication provided that control is good and there have been no fits or changes in medication in the last two years. Most neurodegenerative disorders are acceptable unless respiratory impairment or marked postural hypotension are present.

Normal mental development and a stable mental state are important. The candidate must be able to understand what he/she is about to do and be capable of giving fully informed consent. The candidate's behaviour must not pose a risk to the Tandem Instructor. Current neurosis requiring active treatment, history of psychosis, subnormality, pathological euphoria, drug addition and alcohol dependence all constitute a contraindication.

**A certifying doctor is not stating that a candidate will remain free of injury during parachuting, but that records, history or appropriate clinical examination have not suggested unacceptable medical risk factors.** The preferred level of skill is usually that of a GP without specialist knowledge of parachuting but usually with access to the candidates records or a specialist responsible for the patients care. Other doctors completing the certificate should remain aware that lack of access to the medical record can result in important conditions being overlooked. In cases of doubt, or where further information is required, the Medical Adviser to the British Parachute Association or the National Coach and Safety Officer will be pleased to help, and may be contacted at the address overleaf.

**VALIDITY** The *Parachutist's Declaration* overleaf places the parachutist under a permanent obligation to cease parachuting until obtaining a doctors certificate if he/she develops any of the listed conditions. It should be renewed every 10 years up to the age of 40, and thereafter whenever a doctors certificate is reissued. *Doctor's Certificates* are valid as follows:

If required under age 40	-	As indicated by stability of medical condition (but not beyond age 40)
Age 40 - 49 years	-	The longer of "3 years from date of issue" or "until age 50"
Age 50 years or over	-	3 years

providing that the examining doctor can specify a shorter period of validity if he/she feels it appropriate.

