



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

800 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20591

AUG 21 2012

Mr. Randy Ottinger
Director of Government Relations
United States Parachute Association
5401 Southpoint Centre Boulevard
Fredericksburg, VA 22407

Dear Mr. Ottinger:

This letter is in response to your request for clarification regarding parachute manufacturers establishing a service life beyond the requirements of the Technical Standard Order (TSO) which the parachute was built (TSO-C23b, dated March 29 1962). Members of USPA also maintain that since TSO-C23b, TSO-C23c, and TSO-C23d did not establish a service life, a rigger may extend the life of the system 180 days at a time.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) considers the service life recommended by the manufacturer, a non regulatory requirement for a parachute that meets the standards of TSO-C23b, TSO-C23c, TSO-C23d, and sold before a service life was established.

To hold a parachute owner to a newly established service life required by the manufacturer of a parachute, the manufacturer issues a Service Bulletin with safety concerns and recommends the FAA issue an Airworthiness Directive to establish a regulatory service life.

Thank you for your interest in aviation safety.

Sincerely,


Steven W. Douglas
Manager, Aircraft Maintenance Division