
CHAPTER 25

DELIBERATE WATER DROP ZONE OPERATIONS

Units conducting water drop zone operations should use the following procedures as a guide to ensure the mission is conducted safely. Conduct all jumps under the following conditions:

- Daylight; warm weather conditions.
- Surface winds do not exceed 17 knots.
- Drop control—visual marking system.
- Helicopter—flying under visual flight conditions.
- Wind conditions permit operation on the WDZ.
- Water should be more than 10 feet deep.
- Only one parachutist jumps for each recovery boat for each pass.
- Briefing held for WDZ operations by DZSO/DZSTL and WDZ control personnel.
- Briefing held for parachutists by JM.
- All parachutists are classified as swimmers or strong swimmers.
- All parachutists have completed drownproofing training within the preceding 12 months.
- All parachutists have been trained on activation procedures for the B-7 life preserver to include manual inflation procedures.
- All parachutists have attended prejump training on deliberate water DZ procedures according to unit SOP.

25-1. PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT

The following personnel and equipment are required for deliberate WDZ operations:

a. **Personnel.**

- (1) Medics with ambulance and resuscitator.

(2) Minimum of one safety swimmer for each boat. Safety swimmers must be Red Cross Senior Life Saver qualified.

(3) Swim-qualified parachutists.

(4) Parachutists equipped with life preservers.

b. Mission Control Personnel.

(1) Drop zone safety officer.

(2) Jumpmaster.

(3) Safety swimmers—one for each boat.

(4) Boat operators—one for each boat.

(5) Boat commanders—one for each boat.

(6) Medical aidman.

c. Mission Logistics and Support.

(1) Rotary-wing aircraft.

(2) Equipment for safety swimmers.

(3) Equipment for recovery and command boats.

(4) Serviceable boats and motors. RB-15 boats, 14-foot engineer assault boats, or civilian equivalent boats with motors. If available, hard-body boats should be used.

(5) Required panels and smoke.

(6) Required communications equipment to include spare batteries and one complete spare radio set.

(7) Floating, nonflammable container with suitable anchor for smoke grenades.

(8) First aid equipment to include resuscitator.

(9) Bailing cup.

(10) Motor tie-down rope.

(11) Sheath knife (boat commander).

(12) Pliers.

(13) Extra B-7 life preserver for emergencies.

(14) Life jackets or life preservers for all personnel on board.

(15) Shear pins for motor—2.

(16) Oars or paddles—4.

(17) FM radios with extra batteries for each boat; boat-to-boat, boat-to-air, and surface communications.

(18) Anemometers, AN/PMQ-3A, or commercial anemometers authorized by USAIS messages DTG 101000Z MAR 94, subject: Use of Anemometers During Airdrop Operations, and DTG 212000Z OCT 94, subject: Use of Turbometer During Static Line Airdrop Operations—two (one each for the DZSO and the assistant DZSO). Other anemometers not recommended for use should be employed only after a command-initiated risk assessment is completed.

Regardless of the method or device used to measure DZ winds, the airborne commander is responsible for ensuring winds on the DZ do not exceed 17 knots during static line personnel airdrops.

25-2. ORGANIZATION AND EQUIPMENT OF DROP ZONE DETAIL

The organization and equipment of the drop zone detail include the following:

a. **Command Boat.** The command boat (boat number 1) includes the following personnel and equipment:

(1) **Personnel.**

- Drop zone safety officer.
- Boat commander.
- Boat operator.
- Safety swimmer with equipment.
- Medical aidman.

(2) **Equipment.**

- Marker panels.
- Aid kit.
- Resuscitator.
- Boat hook.
- FM radio (complete) with extra battery for boat-to-boat, boat-to-air, and surface communications.
- Anemometers, AN/PMQ-3A, or commercial anemometers authorized by USAIS messages DTG 101000Z MAR 94, subject: Use of Anemometers During Airdrop Operations, and DTG 2 12000Z OCT 94, subject: Use of Turbometer During Static Line Airdrop Operations—two (one each for the DZSO and the assistant DZSO). Other anemometers not recommended for use should be employed only after a command-initiated risk assessment is completed. Regardless of the method or device used to measure DZ winds, the airborne commander is responsible for ensuring winds on the DZ do not exceed 17 knots during static line personnel airdrops.

b. **Recovery Boats.** Recovery boats include the following personnel and equipment:

(1) **Personnel.**

- Boat commander.
- Boat operator.

- Safety swimmer with equipment. (Safety swimmer is not required to be SCUBA qualified.)

(2) **Equipment.**

- Boat hook.
- Bailing cup.
- Motor tie-down rope.
- Sheath knife (boat commander).
- Pliers.
- Life jackets or life preservers for all personnel on board.
- Extra B-7 life preserver for emergencies.
- Shear pins for motor—2.
- Oars or paddles—4.
- FM radio (complete) with extra battery for boat-to-boat, boat-to-air, and surface communications.

(3) **Safety swimmer equipment.**

- Swim fins—one pair.
- Face mask.
- Snorkel.
- Sheath knife.
- Life vest.
- Wet suit-optional.

(4) **DZSO radio vehicle personnel.**

- Parachute operation officer in charge.
- Driver.

NOTE: The parachute operation OIC briefs parachutists, aircrew, JM, and WDZ control party regarding WDZ operations.

(5) **DZSO (additional duties).**

(a) Briefs boat crews and safety swimmers on the following:

- Overall organization of WDZ.
- Number of lifts and personnel to be dropped.
- Drop altitude and aircraft heading.
- Surface winds.
- Water depth.

- Turnaround time between drops.
 - Recovery procedures.
 - Communications plan.
 - Emergency recovery and evacuation plan.
 - Applicable special instructions.
- (b) Maintains visual observation of all parachutists until safely recovered.
- (6) **Jumpmaster.**
- (a) Performs JM duties.
- (b) Helps recover personnel from the water (with the helicopter) in an emergency.
- (c) Keeps parachutists under observation until safely recovered.
- (7) **Boat commander.**
- (a) Ensures all personnel and equipment are on board.
- (b) Ensures that all equipment is operational.
- (c) Ensures that the boat commander and safety swimmer have been briefed and understand instructions.
- (d) Maintains visual observations of parachutists from time of exit to safe recovery.
- (e) Controls actions of boat operator and safety swimmer.
- (f) Ensures all personnel are trained and rehearsed in their duties.
- (8) **Safety swimmer.**
- (a) Is alert at all times for parachutists in trouble and is prepared to enter the water to assist parachutists.
- (b) Enters water (on order of boat commander) and assists parachutist recovery.
- (9) **Medical aidman.**
- (a) Ensures that the resuscitator is complete and in operational condition.
- (b) Ensures that safety personnel understand proper use of the resuscitators and applicable lifesaving techniques.
- (c) Uses applicable medical equipment and provides required first aid treatment and medical evacuation.

25-3. SAFE CONDITIONS

Units conducting WDZ operations should use the following as a guide to ensure the mission is conducted safely. WDZ parachute jumps are conducted under the following conditions.

- Daylight only; warm weather conditions.
- Surface winds-not in excess of 17 knots.
- Drop control-visual marking system.

- Helicopter—flying under visual flight conditions.
- Wind conditions permit operation on the WDZ.
- Only one parachutist jumps for each recovery boat for each pass.

25-4. JUMP RECOVERY PROCEDURES

After parachutists enter the water, recovery boats (numbers 2 and 3) proceed to the location of designated parachutists (one parachutist is assigned for each recovery boat) and begin recovery operations.

a. **Boat Commander.** The commander of each recovery boat identifies his assigned parachutist as soon as possible.

(1) The boat commander determines whether the parachutist's life preserver (B-7) has been inflated. If the life preserver has not inflated, the recovery boat commander immediately proceeds to the impact point, taking care to stay out of the way of the other parachutists. Upon reaching the assigned parachutist, the boat commander treats the situation as a parachutist in distress and takes appropriate action.

(2) The DZSO's command boat (number 1) is located so the DZSO can observe the landing of parachutists and reinforces either boats number 2 or 3 with additional safety swimmers and a resuscitator as required.

(3) The following procedure is used for recovery operations.

(a) When possible, recovery boats approach parachutists from the upwind side.

(b) If after impact the parachutist experiences no difficulties, he activates his canopy release assemblies and signals "All OK" by raising one arm straight up (without waving).

NOTE: *Any other signal, or no signal*, given by the parachutist is considered as a distress situation and immediate action is taken.

(c) The boat commander directs the boat alongside the parachutist and extends the boat hook so that it can be grasped by the parachutist. If the parachutist is unable to grasp the hook, the boat commander secures a portion of the parachutist's equipment with the hook.

b. **Safety Swimmers.** On instruction from the boat commander, the safety swimmer enters the water alongside the parachutist to assist the parachutist and to recover the parachute canopy and other equipment. If a parachutist has gone underwater, the following action is taken.

(1) Red smoke is displayed to indicate an emergency. All other activities cease.

(2) The safety swimmer dives to recover the parachutist and cuts him free of equipment.

(3) The DZSO moves his boat to the scene and prepares to use the resuscitator.

c. **Recovery Helicopter.** The jump aircraft is alerted to be prepared to assist in emergency recovery operations.

(1) When directed by the DZSO, the pilot hovers near the location, and the JM hooks or ties a portion of the submerged parachutist's equipment on a skid. The pilot pulls the parachutist from the water. Medical evacuation is by air.

(2) After normal recovery operations, parachutists and equipment are unloaded at the assembly area. All boats are repositioned for the resumption of jump operations.

25-5. WATER DROP ZONE PREJUMP TRAINING

Prejump training for water jumps should be conducted on the same day as the scheduled jump.

a. **Prejump Training.** This training includes demonstrations and practical exercises for all parachutists; use of the suspended harness is recommended. Prejump training includes but is not limited to the following:

- (1) Six points of performance for water jumps.
 - Check body position and count.
 - Check canopy and gain canopy control.
 - Inflate B-7 life preserver.
 - Keep a sharp lookout during descent and maneuver to indicated impact area.
 - Prepare to land by turning and facing into the wind, maintaining position until just before landing.
 - Prepare to make a PLF (if water is shallow or ground contact is likely).
- (2) Emergencies in the air.
- (3) Emergencies in the water.
- (4) Recovery procedures.
- (5) Orientation at the WDZ.
- (6) Mission coordination briefing and special instructions.

b. **Mission Coordination Briefing.** The mission coordination briefing should be conducted immediately following prejump training.

c. **Landing.** Upon landing, parachutists must be prepared to perform the following:

- (1) Activate one (or both) canopy release assembly after entering the water.
- (2) Prevent fouling in the canopy or suspension lines during severe wind conditions.

(3) Signal “All OK” (extending one stationary arm overhead) or “Help” (any other signal, or no signal) to the recovery boat.

(4) Stand by for pickup; remain calm.

d. **OIC Responsibilities.** The parachute operation OIC ensures that all personnel scheduled for a water jump are swim-qualified and have completed the required prejump training.