



FAA
Great Lakes Region, Airports Division
Safety Standards Branch

Airport Certification Information Bulletin (ACIB) 13-08

Subject: “Additional Precautions for Approaching Aircraft with Ballistic Parachutes, Ejection Seats, and Airbags”

The continued advancement in aircraft safety brings with it evolving challenges for ARFF personnel and other first responders. This referenced CertAlert addresses the need for continued vigilance when responding to aircraft accidents which may involve rocket-deployed emergency parachutes, commonly called ballistic parachutes; aircraft equipped with ejection seats; and airbag systems. We recommend that airport operators share the information below with first responders and include it in their annual emergency training plans.

[CertAlert 13-04](#)

**Federal Aviation Administration**
National Part 139 CertAlert

Date: 7/29/2013 No. 13-04

To: Part 139 Airport Operators, All Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) Departments

Subject: Additional Precautions for Approaching Aircraft with Ballistic Parachutes, Ejection Seats, and Airbags

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1. **Purpose.** This CertAlert notifies airport management and ARFF personnel about the additional precautions necessary to safely deal with military rocket-deployed emergency parachute systems, sometimes called ballistic parachutes, aircraft equipped with ejection seats, and airbag systems located in General Aviation aircraft.
2. **Cancellation.** This CertAlert cancels CertAlert 04-13, Rocket-Deployed Emergency Parachute Systems, dated October 28, 2004.
3. **Recommended Actions.**
 4. The FAA recommends that airport operators review this updated information and provide it to the ARFF departments and other first responders involved in annual ad operations with the airport.
 5. The FAA recommends that airport operators include the information below in their ARFF depression and other first responder's comprehensive annual training plan.

Rocket-Deployed Emergency Parachute Systems

While there are several manufacturers of ballistic parachute systems on the market, the HES Inc. system is common. Other common brands are Pioneer, Second Chance, Advanced Ballistic Systems, Galaxy, and GQ Security.

The HES whole aircraft recovery system is designed for pilots who believe that in some circumstances, safe landings may be difficult if not impossible. Even with these systems, however, the pilot does not always have the opportunity to deploy them before impact. If the impact is notably violent, the system will likely fire as a result of airframe bending or distortion, but this does not always occur. If crash forces do not activate the parachute system, the system's rocket remains very much alive and is capable of being fired.