

New BPA Canopy System



Chris Allen explains the new canopy coaching and grading system – aiming to make the sport safer for us all

The BPA has just launched new Canopy Handling and Canopy Piloting programmes, in response to demand and with the aim of eradicating, or at least lowering, the number of fatalities and serious injuries caused by low turns.

Canopy Handling Grades CH1 and CH2

As of 1 June this year, the new Canopy Handling 1 (CH1) grade is needed to qualify for an FAI A Certificate (red). At the same time, the old IC1 grade is discontinued and is now replaced by a Canopy Handling 2 (CH2) grade and a Jumpmaster 1 (JM1) grade. CH2, JM1 and 50 jumps are needed to qualify for an FAI B certificate.

Canopy Piloting Grades CP1 and CP2

The Canopy Piloting 1 (CP1) grade will become mandatory for those wishing to carry out high performance or swoop landings. The Canopy Piloting 2 (CP2) grade is only needed if you want to enter an official BPA Canopy Piloting event, be it national, regional or otherwise.

To Qualify

The tables to the right show the basic practical and administrative requirements for the above grades. Each practical area of the grading system needs a thorough briefing beforehand, from an instructor (for pre FAI A Certificate); or canopy handling coach (for B Certificate); or canopy piloting coach (for CP1 & CP2).



FREE Coaching Manuals

BPA Canopy Handling and Canopy Piloting manuals have been produced to cover the relevant grades and are available from your CCI (free of charge) or on the 'Stay Safe' section of the BPA website. The manuals are designed to support coaching and instruction, not replace them; you must get a proper brief before attempting any of the techniques described.

Improving Canopy Education

The basic concept behind the CH and CP programmes is to formalise canopy control tuition beyond the first jump course and increase the level of canopy education for everyone. The programmes will only work if we have people to coach our skydivers through the relevant grades. Ideally we would like every BPA drop zone to have its own canopy handling/piloting school in the not too distant future.

Coaches Wanted

If you have the relevant experience and are interested in becoming a canopy coach, please ask your CCI about applying. In terms of relevant experience, if you want to coach Canopy Handling you need an FAI C Certificate (red) or equivalent, CH2, a minimum of two years in the sport, some form of coaching experience and to be fully familiar with the BPA Canopy Handling Manual. To coach Canopy Piloting, you will need a D Certificate (red) or equivalent, CP1, two years in the sport, coaching experience and to be fully familiar with the BPA Canopy Piloting manual.

FAQs

A number of questions have been asked already, such as:

"I am halfway through my IC1 what do I do now?"

"I've been swooping my canopy for ages, will I have to stop doing it until I have a CP1 grade?"

"I'm just about to apply for my C certificate, will I have to do CH1, CH2 and JM1?"

Like any new system there will inevitably be a transitional period. During this time CCIs will decide where they wish to place you within the revised structure. If you're currently halfway through IC1, the briefings and practical exercises that you've already completed will still count towards your CH1, CH2 and JM1 grades. The same applies for someone just about to apply for a C Certificate. Please understand though, after 1 June '05, anyone applying for an A, B and/or C Certificate must have the relevant CH & JM grades.



Current Swoopers

If you're already swooping, we highly recommend that you read the Canopy Piloting manual, regardless of your current experience. The new system is not designed to stop people swooping if they are doing it competently and safely. It is up to your CCI to decide whether they wish to issue you with a CP1 grade or whether they would prefer you to go through the CP1 programme before doing so.

Calling ALL Jumpers

Whether you are affected by the changes to the BPA qualification system or not, I would strongly urge you to read the Canopy Handling and, if appropriate, the Canopy Piloting manuals. The information they contain may save your life.

Qualification in Progress	Practical	Paperwork
CATEGORY 8		
CH1 Canopy Handling 1	Increase the range of the canopy using steering toggles on at least 3 descents	Practical requirements signed for in logbook
		CH1 written test successfully completed
	Complete flat turns on at least 3 descents	FAI 'A' Certificate application form completed and signed by an Advanced Instructor / CCI
		Written test, application form, photographs & payment sent to BPA
FAI A Certificate	Display a reasonable level of canopy control	BPA will send FAI 'A' Certificate with endorsed CH1 stamp back to you
CH1 & A Certificate achieved		
CH2 Canopy Handling 2	A Certificate / CH1 holder with at least 50 jumps	Grading System Record Sheet JM1 and CH2 (BPA form 247) filled in and / or practical requirements signed for in logbook
	Complete 5 out of 10 pre-declared, safe, landings within an area of 30m in diameter	
	Increase the range of the canopy using front and rear risers on at least 3 descents	CH2 written test successfully completed
	Rear riser turn as an avoidance manoeuvre on at least 3 descents	
JM1 Jump Master 1	CH2 grading sticker endorsed by Advanced Instructor / CCI and stuck into FAI Certificate	B Certificate application form completed and signed by an Advanced Instructor / CCI
	Demonstrate the ability to spot correctly from an altitude of at least 10,000 feet	
	Familiar with and able to carry out the duties and responsibilities of a jumpmaster	FAI certificate, CH2 written test, application form & payment sent to BPA
	Receive an introduction to the BPA Operations Manual	
FAI B Certificate	Be familiar with and able to carry out flight line checking on other parachutists of FAI 'A' Certificate (red) and above	BPA will send FAI 'B' Certificate back to you
	Able to undertake packing, inspection and basic fault-finding on a ram-air canopy	
	JM1 grading sticker endorsed by Advanced Instructor / CCI and stuck into FAI Certificate	
JM1, CH2 & B Certificate achieved		
CP1 Canopy Piloting 1	C certificate / CH2 holder with at least 200 jumps	Grading System Record Sheet CP1 (BPA form 248) filled in and / or practical requirements signed for in logbook
	Proficient at conducting canopy drills (360°, 180°, 90° turns, and straight on approaches) at altitudes above 3,000 feet	
	Safe, high performance landings, using front risers during a straight on approach, on at least 5 consecutive descents	CP1 written test successfully completed
	Safe, high performance landings, using a front riser to create a final approach turn of between 45° and 90°, on at least 5 consecutive descents	CP1 grading sticker endorsed by Advanced Instructor / CCI and stuck into FAI Certificate
Safe, high performance landings, using a front riser to create a final approach turn of between 90° and 180°, on at least 5 consecutive descents		
CP1 Achieved		
CP2 Canopy Piloting 2	D certificate / CP1 holder with at least 1,000 jumps	CP2 grading sticker endorsed by Advanced Instructor / CCI and stuck into FAI Certificate
	Has logged 500 high performance sloop landings including 100 in the previous 12 months	
	Safe, high performance runs, over a minimum 185ft long, 30ft wide carving course, that consists of 10ft vertical markers with a defined entry and exit gate, on at least 3 pre-declared consecutive descents	
CP2 Achieved		