

Accelerated Freefall from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Accelerated Freefall (AFF) (known in [Canada](#) as Progressive Freefall) is a method of [skydiving](#) training. It has replaced [static line progression](#) as the most common method of training skydivers, though static line is still used at many smaller [drop zones](#). This method of skydiving training is called "accelerated" because the progression is the fastest way to experience solo freefall, normally from 10,000 to 14,500 feet "Above Ground Level" (AGL). In static line progression, many more jumps are required to experience solo freefall, but the jumps are less expensive for the student as one instructor can dispatch multiple students per load, whereas under AFF, each student is assigned one or two instructors dedicated just to one student.

Training Technique

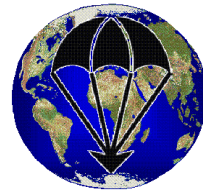
In most AFF programs, two instructors jump with the student during their first three AFF jumps, although some programs may use only one instructor. On the initial levels, the instructor(s) hold on to the student until the student deploys their own parachute. Hence, this method is classified as "Harness Hold Training." The AFF instructors have no physical connection to the student other than their grip on the student, so once the student's parachute is deployed the instructors fly away and deploy their own canopies. Deployment of the main canopy for students in an AFF program is generally 5500ft AGL. If the student experiences trouble in the deployment of their parachute, the instructors first use hand signals to remind the student to "Pull". If the student still experiences trouble, the instructors will assist their student by physically putting the student's hand on the pilot chute, but if the student still has trouble, the instructor will deploy for the student. The instructor may pull the student's main canopy at any time the student appears to be in danger. Extra "pull" handles are usually installed on student gear giving additional access for instructors. Once the student has proven they can deploy their own parachute on the first few jumps, the student will be released on subsequent levels and will have the opportunity to prove to their instructors that they have the basic flying skills required to skydive without assistance. On release skydives there is a possibility the instructor may not be able to dock and assist at pull time, so it is important that the student has already learned the skills required to pull on their own.

Instructors on all AFF levels have a hard deck where they must pull their own parachute and save their own life. If they have not been able to assist their student by this altitude, the student's rig is equipped with an "Automatic Activation Device (AAD)" that will fire the reserve parachute if the student passes the activation altitude at freefall speeds. While it is extremely rare that a student will have an AAD activation, this final level of protection protects the student as much as possible from the consequences of being out of control or not being able to deploy their own parachute.

As the instructors freefall with the student, they are able to correct the student's body position and other problems during freefall by communicating with the student with hand signals in freefall and debriefing the student and conducting corrective training after the jump. Later levels only require one instructor and involve the student learning to perform aerial maneuvers such as turns, forward movement, flips, and fall rate control. The purpose of the maneuvers are to prove to the student and instructor that the student can perform a disorienting maneuver causing intentional instability followed by regaining control.

The instructor(s) determine when the student has passed the requirements or "Targeted Learning Objectives (TLOs)" for each level. During the AFF jumps, the student may have radio contact with ground personnel who direct the student's maneuvers under their parachute, however the student must have the skills for a solo landing in case the radio fails.

INTERNATIONAL AIRBORNE OPERATIONS



Licensing Organizations and Protocols

In the United States, there are no official government required training procedures. As long as a jumper wears equipment that meets certain Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requirements in design and maintenance, anyone can intentionally exit an aircraft legally. However, the ([USPA](#)), a non-profit organization that represents Skydivers and Drop Zone Owners, has written protocols and "Basic Safety Requirements (BSRs)" that guide USPA rated instructors on how to teach students to earn their USPA licences. While a licence is not required to jump legally, the USPA licence will allow the skydiver to travel to other USPA dropzones and use their licence to prove they have the skills required to jump. The USPA protocol for training students is called the "Integrated Student Program" (ISP). The ISP is separated into "Categories", each with "Targeted Learning Objectives (TLOs)" that must be met before the student progresses to the next level. Static Line, AFF, and Tandem Progression all follow the same categories, but use different methods to train within each category.

Many drop zones classify their AFF levels by numbers, such as "AFF 6", but the USPA classification is by category letter. Categories A through E are the instructional jumps where the student must be accompanied with an appropriately rated instructor. Since most AFF programs have 7 jumps, but there are only 5 letters between A and E, some categories require more than one jump to complete. After Category E, students are cleared to self supervise. Categories F, G and H are completed as solo skydives or with the assistance of a rated coach or instructor. Once the student has completed 25 skydives, and has their A licence requirements signed off by an instructor or coach, they are eligible for their A licence and are no longer a student.

In the UK, there are 8 levels. The 8th level in the UK is what is known as a "hop and pop". A hop and pop is where a skydiver deploys his or her parachute immediately after exiting the aircraft. This is normally at lower altitude than AFF students are used to and there is a chance of panic setting in when jumping so close to the ground. The 8th level is part of the [British Parachute Association](#) requirements.

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