



USPA  
SAFETY & TRAINING  
ADVISOR  
HANDBOOK  
April 2003

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layout and design:  
Emily Bump Girard

cover design and illustration:  
Shonda M. Smith

**United States Parachute Association**

1440 Duke St.

Alexandria, Virginia 22314

703.836.3495 (phone)

703.836.3495 (fax)

[www.uspa.org](http://www.uspa.org)

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Insurance Claim Form

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A License Progression Card for ISP (four pages)

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A License Proficiency Card (two pages)

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B-D License Application

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Coach Proficiency Card

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AFF Instructor Proficiency Card

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IAD/Static-Line Instructor Proficiency Card

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Tandem Instructor Proficiency Card

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B License test

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C License test

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D License test

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B-D License Test Answer Key

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PRO Rating Test #1

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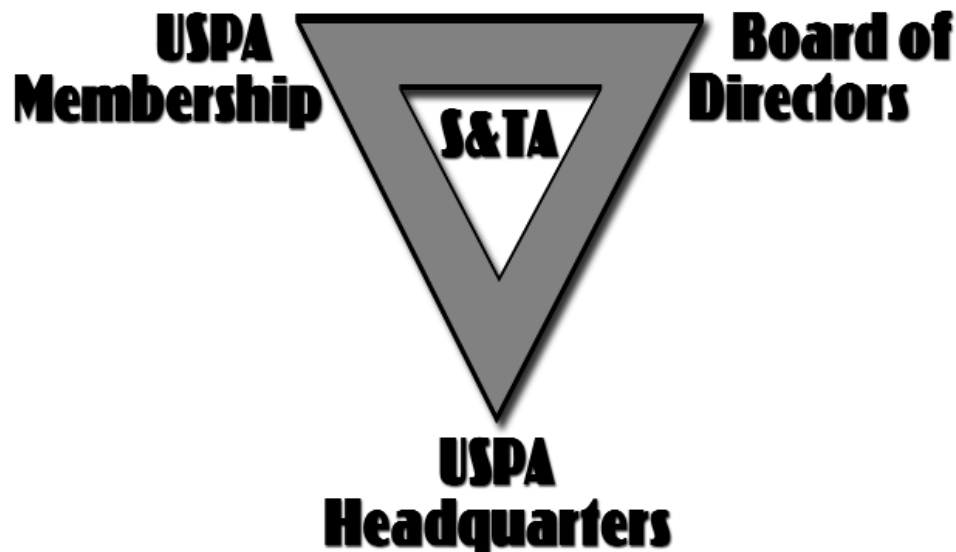
PRO Rating Test #2

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PRO Rating Test Answer Key

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## INTRODUCTION



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USPA adopted the inverted triangle symbol for the USPA Safety & Training Advisor upon instituting the S&TA program in March, 1985. The volunteer S&TA corps lies at its center, acting as representative and communicator among the three facets of USPA: the dues-paying USPA members, their elected USPA Board, and the professional USPA Headquarters staff.

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### THE S&TA AND THE S&TA HANDBOOK

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S&TAs are the USPA Regional Director's designated representatives in the field to advise skydivers and drop zone management and staff on USPA policies. S&TAs also facilitate the administration of USPA safety, training, rating, and awards programs.

The Safety & Training Advisor Handbook provides USPA Safety & Training Advisors (S&TAs) with the necessary guidance, instructions, and references to fulfill their responsibilities.

As a resource for the S&TA, the S&TA Handbook augments the Skydiver's Information Manual (SIM), the Instructional Rating Manual (IRM), and the USPA Governance Manual.

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# THE ROLE OF THE SAFETY & TRAINING ADVISOR

## What Is an S&TA?

Skydiving continues to be conducted with minimal control and supervision by local, state, and federal agencies. The federal government, in particular, has long since recognized that the most capable people of regulating skydiving are those who do it. Specifically, the Federal Aviation Administration has recognized USPA as best suited for promoting and supporting self-regulation.

At the very core of self-regulation is the USPA Safety & Training Advisor. This S&TA, an unpaid volunteer, is appointed for the position by the USPA Director for his or her USPA Region. For the skydivers and staff at the drop zone, the S&TA is the conduit between the members and their governing body.

The S&TA interacts directly with the Regional Director and USPA's administrative staff at USPA Headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia, on behalf of all USPA members, Temporary, Regular, and Group.

## Appointments and Reappointments

In most cases, the Regional Director will appoint an S&TA for a specific drop zone, whether or not that drop zone is a USPA Group Member. The Regional Director may also appoint multiple S&TAs for a single drop zone if the demand for services so warrants. In special cases, a Regional Director may require an advisor for an area containing more than one drop zone. The Regional Director may also appoint one or more S&TAs-at-large for the entire USPA Region. Some USPA employees function as S&TAs at large and can perform S&TA duties as necessary.

Specific qualifications of S&TAs, procedures for appointment, and administrative processing procedures are provided in Section 1-4 of the USPA Governance Manual.

- The term of each S&TA expires on March 31st of the year following the election of the Board of Directors unless the appointment is surrendered or revoked.
- Each appointment is reviewed by the Regional Director at least annually.

## S&TA Responsibilities

The principal responsibility of the S&TA is to promote safe skydiving. Toward that goal, the S&TA serves specific advisory and administrative functions:

- Observes skydiving operations to verify compliance with the Basic Safety Requirements
- Informs the Regional Director of all flagrant and/or recurring safety violations
- In grave cases, takes summary action under Section 1-6 of the USPA Governance Manual
- Provides safety and training advice to skydivers, drop zone operators, and rating holders
- Reviews plans for exhibition jumps
- Verifies that drop zones qualify as “sanctioned” by meeting the minimum drop zone requirements (see the BSRs in the Skydiver’s Information Manual)
- Assists and advises with extraordinary skydive operations (see the BSRs and Advanced Progression section in the Skydiver’s Information Manual)
- Investigates accidents and submits reports (see “Accidents and the S&TA” in this manual)
- Verifies the requirements on D-License applications and rating renewals (see “D-License and Rating Renewal” in this manual)
- Verifies the requirements for the USPA 3-D Award (see the Performance Awards section in the Skydiver’s Information Manual)
- Promotes USPA policies and programs, for example, USPA Safety Day
- Unless excused by the Regional Director, attends an annual S&TA meeting called by the Regional Director

The Regional Director may designate other related tasks as necessary

## Limits of Appointment by Location

Except for specified S&TAs at large, each S&TA is appointed for a specific drop zone or location. S&TAs appointed for a specific location may exercise their duties only at that location. In cases where a visiting S&TA is requested to take care of an administrative duty such as signing for a rating renewal or administering a D-License test, the visiting S&TA should refer the member to the local S&TA for that drop zone or location. If there is no S&TA assigned for that specific location and it is within the S&TA’s USPA Region, a visiting S&TA may provide services to the member and should advise his or her Regional Director.

In cases where a visiting S&TA observes a safety violation or other hazardous activity, the local S&TA should be informed of the action. If the visiting S&TA feels that appropriate actions have not been taken by the local S&TA, the Regional Director should be notified.

Once relocating to another USPA Region, an S&TA’s appointment is terminated. He or she may be reappointed by the USPA Director for the new USPA Region.

## Communications

Self-regulation is enhanced if there is continual information flow among the S&TA, the Regional Director, and USPA Headquarters. To assist in this effort, Headquarters maintains a list of all S&TAs. Each S&TA should update the Regional Director and USPA Headquarters with changes in address, phone number, and e-mail address.

USPA Headquarters periodically publishes the S&T Newsletter sent via e-mail to all USPA rating holders and S&TAs. All the bulletins are archived on the USPA website, [www.uspa.org](http://www.uspa.org) for access by anyone. Also of interest to S&TAs is the DZO Incoming, sent to USPA Group Members, and other special bulletins, all found on the website.

## OVERVIEW OF USPA DOCUMENTS

USPA publishes several manuals to assist you with the information that you will need as an S&TA. Below is a list of pertinent information that can be found in each manual:

### USPA Governance Manual

*(not distributed to S&TAs)*

The USPA Governance Manual outlines the structure, procedures, and policies that govern the USPA Board of Directors and each of its committees. Of particular interest to S&TAs include:

- Section 1-1, The Constitution and By-Laws
- Section 1-2, Structure, Procedures, and Responsibilities
- Section 1-4, Regional Directors
- Section 1-6, Disciplinary Actions
- Section 5, Safety & Training
- Section 7, Membership

The principle USPA committee affecting the S&TA is the Safety & Training Committee. Other committees of note to the S&TA include the Group Membership Committee, which oversees the USPA Group Membership program for drop zones, and the Regional Director Committee, which includes all USPA Regional Directors. Regional Directors appoint the S&TAs for the drop zones—USPA Group Member or not—in their USPA Regions. The USPA Membership Committee oversees all USPA awards, some of which require the signature of an S&TA.

The USPA Governance Manual also lists the duties of the Regional Directors and offers them guidance with the selection criteria for choosing the S&TA at each drop zone.

In Section 1-6, the USPA Governance Manual outlines disciplinary actions that are available to the S&TA, the Regional Director, and the USPA Board of Directors. Each S&TA needs to understand his or her potential role in USPA disciplinary actions.

The USPA Governance Manual is available as a free download on line at [www.uspa.org](http://www.uspa.org).

### Skydiver's Information Manual

The SIM contains information regarding student training, awards, licenses, exhibition jumps, extraordinary skydives, and recommendations regarding all of the various skydiving disciplines. It also contains a number of applications and forms for USPA awards, licenses, and the PRO Exhibition Jumper rating. The SIM is updated annually each September and sent to current S&TAs free of charge.

The Basic Safety Requirements and information on waivers to the BSRs are found in Section 2 of the SIM. USPA members are required to abide by the BSRs. Except for the BSRs and the FAA regulations pertaining to skydiving that are included within the SIM, all other areas of the SIM are recommendations.

The SIM is also available as an on-line reference at [www.uspa.org](http://www.uspa.org).

### Instructional Rating Manual

*(not distributed to S&TAs)*

The IRM contains the course training information for all USPA instructional rating courses:

- USPA Coach
- USPA Instructor in Accelerated Freefall, Instructor-Assisted Deployment, Static Line, and Tandem
- Instructor Examiner

Instructions and requirements for obtaining the initial rating as well as renewing the rating annually are listed. The IRM includes all forms and proficiency cards needed for every rating course, so one manual may be used at multiple rating or rating discipline courses.

The USPA Board revises the IRM primarily at USPA Board meetings held twice each year. USPA Headquarters compiles all the changes and updates the IRM annually, and the revision date is printed on the title page and in the bottom margin of each page. Candidates attending a certification course are required to have an IRM that has been published within two years of the date of that course.

“IRM Essentials” is a document containing key excerpts from the IRM, specifically for those preparing for an instructional rating course and rating holders seeking rating renewal information. It is available at no charge on line at [www.uspa.org](http://www.uspa.org)

### Skydiver's Competition Manual

*(not distributed to S&TAs)*

The SCM contains the rules and regulations regarding all USPA skydiving competition disciplines. It also includes information regarding the USPA Competition Judge Rating, U.S. Nationals site selection and United States Parachute Team delegation and financial procedures.

The SCM is available from the USPA Store or on line at [www.uspa.org](http://www.uspa.org).

**Document Overview**

**The USPA Group Membership Manual**

*(not distributed to S&TAs)*

The USPA Group Membership Manual contains information on the USPA Group Membership program, the Group Member pledge to abide by the rules, use of the USPA Airport and Airspace Access Defense Fund, and the Volunteer Courtesy Inspection Program available to USPA Group Member centers.

The USPA Group Membership Manual is available upon request from USPA Headquarters.

# ACCIDENTS AND THE S&TA

## SERIOUS ACCIDENTS AND FATALITIES

The USPA Safety & Training Advisor is one of USPA's most valuable assets in the event of a serious skydiving accident. A difficult situation can be made easier by having an established plan in place, including a current notification list for the appropriate officials and advisers and what steps need to be taken. S&TAs are encouraged to take a basic first-aid course, available through the American Red Cross.

Each S&TA should become familiar with the following advice on how to deal with fatalities and serious incidents for the benefit of the victim, the skydiving establishment, and to help later with the investigation.

1. Call for medical assistance. A call to 911 will alert the police and rescue personnel.
2. Administer first aid using qualified personnel if there is a chance that the individual may be alive, even if it means disturbing the evidence.
3. Secure the area. Remove all unnecessary people from the scene.
4. Do not allow anyone to tamper with the equipment beyond what is necessary for the treatment of the victim. Historically, law enforcement or rescue personnel cut the equipment off of the victim before an informed skydiving official can investigate the scene. Especially in the event of a fatality, disturbing or destroying the equipment can make it difficult or impossible to conclude what went wrong. The S&TA or someone in charge of handling accidents at the drop zone should advise local officials of the importance of preserving the scene before they disturb it.
5. Stop jumping. In most cases it would be a wise decision to halt jumping while rescue and initial investigation efforts are underway.
6. In the event of a fatality, notify the local FAA Flight Standards District Office and USPA Regional Director or, if during business hours (9-5 Eastern Time), USPA Headquarters (800-371-USPA). You should have emergency numbers available at the drop zone for the FSDO and the USPA Regional Director. Once USPA Headquarters is notified of a fatality, the Director of Safety & Training will advise the USPA Board of the initial information received from the S&TA or the Regional Director.
7. Secure the victim's personal effects.
8. Secure the victim's logbook, a copy of the liability release, emergency contacts, manifest record, DZ training log (if applicable) and any other related documents. Copies of various documents may need to be reviewed by the coroner, local law enforcement authorities, or the next-of-kin. However, only the drop zone owner should give permission to provide access to copies of DZ documents, and original DZ records should never be surrendered. An attorney's advice may be helpful.

9. Notify the next-of-kin. For every jumper, the drop zone should have an up-to-date release and emergency contact information. In most cases, it is better to let the local law enforcement contact the next-of-kin.

## INVESTIGATION AND REPORTING OF ACCIDENTS

Fatalities, accidents, and other significant incidents are an unfortunate part of skydiving that must be addressed by drop zone staff and S&TAs. Skydivers learn important lessons from the mistakes of others, so the role of the S&TA as impartial investigator is critical to the skydiving community. The S&TA should try to file an effective report.

To create an accurate account, USPA needs the S&TA to gather information about incidents and accidents, including witness accounts and the personal observations of the investigator.

USPA keeps reports confidential by following the procedures included in this Section. The integrity and effectiveness of the reporting system relies on each USPA official to follow USPA's procedures exactly as outlined.

### INVESTIGATING NON-FATAL INCIDENTS

Significant incidents can range from minor to serious and may include injuries, noteworthy malfunctions, unsafe procedures, unusual or ethically unacceptable skydives, or other extraordinary occurrences concerning skydiving operations.

Reports of non-fatal incidents should be as detailed as possible. Use the USPA Accident Report Form whenever possible, and complete all applicable sections. The S&TA should compile and forward the report to USPA. In the event of the S&TA's absence, he or she should appoint a USPA Instructor. USPA Headquarters will provide additional copies of the USPA Accident Report Form upon request.

### INVESTIGATING FATALITIES

The USPA Regional Director will generally call on an S&TA to investigate and prepare an official report on a fatal accident. Whenever possible, the investigating USPA official should be someone other than the drop zone operator. Also, if the investigation requires a rigger, he or she should not be the one supervising the packing at the drop zone or the one who packed the reserve of the deceased jumper. Other circumstances may put a particular S&TA or other resource too close to an accident and interfere with the impartiality of the investigation.

## Accidents and the S&TA

Following the plan below can help keep the investigation on track:

1. Advise local officials that the FAA might wish to investigate before the body is removed. Before local officials insist on disturbing the accident scene or removing the body, try to photograph it from as many angles as possible. This will help to provide accurate information in the future.
2. Begin the investigation immediately. Identify yourself as an appointed USPA official and offer assistance with the investigation.
3. If you are not an FAA certified rigger, it may be helpful to enlist an impartial rigger to help.
4. Investigate the equipment. Local officials do not have the expertise with skydiving equipment that is necessary to assess the situation and should be discouraged from confiscating it until your investigation is complete. You should arrange to investigate the equipment further at another time, in case it becomes necessary.
5. As soon as possible after the accident, obtain as many witness statements as possible and attach the written statements to the USPA Accident Report Form.
6. Record the pertinent information.
  - a. The USPA Accident Report Form has itemized entry lines for the information needed for a thorough investigation in most cases.
  - b. Filling out each section completely will help ensure that the necessary information has been recorded.
  - c. The USPA Accident Report Form is included in your S&TA packet, and you can request extras from USPA Headquarters or download them from the USPA website at [www.uspa.org](http://www.uspa.org).
7. Most skydiving fatalities occur from either human error or a problem with the equipment. It is important that the investigation uncover the true cause of the fatality. This requires that the investigator be impartial and unbiased. Opinions and conjecture will only harm the investigation and could lead to an incorrect conclusion.

## SUBMISSION AND DISPOSAL OF ACCIDENT REPORTS

To maintain confidentiality of the report and to protect the integrity of the USPA accident and fatality reporting system, USPA observes the following operating procedures. S&TAs should carefully follow the procedures outlined for their role.

### NON-FATAL INCIDENT REPORTS

1. The investigating S&TA or, in the absence of an S&TA, a USPA Instructor whom the S&TA assigns, should print or type a detailed report of each significant incident and send the original report to USPA Headquarters.

2. USPA Headquarters stores any information to identify trends for USPA and the skydiving industry.
3. USPA Headquarters may publish a brief synopsis of the report in *Parachutist*, excluding the date, specific location, and names of anyone involved.

### FATALITY REPORTS

1. The S&TA or other reporting USPA official notifies USPA Headquarters with a preliminary report.
2. Upon receipt of the initial report, verbal or otherwise, USPA Headquarters notifies the USPA Board of Directors and the president of the Parachute Industry Association of any pertinent details.
3. Upon receipt of the final report from the S&TA or other USPA official investigating the accident, USPA Headquarters:
  - a. prepares a narrative report for Publication in *Parachutist* magazine of the relevant events of the accident excluding the date, specific location, and names of anyone involved
  - b. disposes of any information pertaining to the identity of the deceased jumper, the investigating official, the location, and any witnesses
  - c. records in a database certain statistical information from accident reports for later review
4. No later than March 1 of each year, USPA Headquarters sends the original reports of all fatalities (without identities of victims, investigators, locations, or witnesses) from the previous year to the author of the annual fatality summary for *Parachutist* Magazine, who is selected by USPA Headquarters.
5. The author of the annual fatality report is to destroy the USPA Accident Report Forms and any attachments no later than 30 days after the publication of the annual fatality report summary in *Parachutist* Magazine.

## USPA POLICY REGARDING PROPRIETARY AND PRIVILEGED INFORMATION

### BACKGROUND

The success of USPA's safety reporting program depends upon the free exchange of information between field reporters [e.g., S&TAs] and USPA Headquarters.

As long as reporting officials believe that the information will be used only for statistical and educational purposes and that the reports themselves will not be released to third parties, the reporting system will continue to serve the best interests of the membership as a whole.

If, on the other hand, this privileged information is released to third parties for whatever reason, USPA will lose the trust of the field reporters and, with it, valuable safety-generating data.

**Accidents and the S&TA**

**POLICY**

USPA incident and accident reports, whether formal or informal, will be considered privileged, confidential documents for use only by the reporting party and USPA officials as necessary to enhance safety through education and training.

Any and all requests by third parties to access such information or documents will be referred to the USPA Executive Director, who, in consultation with the USPA President, will determine the need to refer to counsel.

Failure to adhere to these procedures will subject the violating USPA member to disciplinary action in accordance with Section 1-6 of the USPA Governance Manual.

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## FAA REGULATIONS

**As an S&TA**, it is important that you are familiar with the Federal Aviation Regulations that govern skydiving operations in the United States. Pertinent passages from the FARs are included in the Skydiver's Information Manual for easy reference.

Skydiving remains largely unregulated by the FAA because of the valuable relationship between skydivers and the FAA that USPA officials have forged over the years. However, there are rules that have been established and outlined in various sections of the FARs to regulate skydiving flights and procedures, aircraft modifications, skydiving equipment, and parachute packing. These rules are established primarily to protect the public— those on the ground and others using the airspace.

The local Flight Standards District Office of the FAA can be a valuable resource on matters that pertain to the FAA. You should visit your local FSDO and introduce yourself to those who are involved with skydiving operations. They are important contacts that you want to make before you need to conduct business with the FAA.

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# EXTRAORDINARY SKYDIVES AND EXHIBITION JUMPS

## Extraordinary Skydives

Extraordinary skydives include night jumps, water jumps, jumps from above 15,000 feet MSL, exhibition jumps, pre-planned breakaway jumps, and other jumps requiring special equipment or procedures that might be unfamiliar to most jumpers.

S&TAs should refer to the SIM to provide the BSR-required information and USPA-recommended advice to jumpers on the specific nature of the skydive that they will be performing. The S&TA should also review the SIM for recommended prior experience and licensing of each skydiver involved.

Before advising jumpers, the S&TA should be familiar with all FARs, BSRs, and USPA recommendations, as well as the specific jump operations being planned.

## Exhibition Jumps

Exhibition jumps are defined in the SIM, and several BSRs specifically apply to the requirements for skydivers making exhibition jumps. USPA and the FAA have agreed on additional definitions for types of demos, based on the size and layout of the landing area. These definitions are included in the SIM and in the FAA Inspector's Handbook.

USPA administers the PRO Exhibition Jumper rating to qualify jumpers for exhibitions into stadiums with spectator stands on more than one side of the field and other restricted landing areas defined in the SIM Section on PRO ratings. Refer to that section for instructions on administering initial PRO Rating applications and other PRO and demonstration jump information.

USPA issues third-party liability demonstration jump insurance. Regular membership third-party liability skydiving insurance does not cover demos. Third-party demo insurance is contingent on the observance of USPA rules and recommendations for exhibition jumps. The application for demonstration jump insurance requests that an S&TA be consulted for any demonstration jumps that are performed in their area.

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## D-LICENSE VERIFICATION AND RENEWAL

**USPA can issue licenses and renew ratings** only with complete and correctly submitted applications. USPA Headquarters returns rejected applications to the applicant. Rejects can present a hardship for the USPA member, who may be traveling or otherwise inconvenienced in trying to get an S&TA to correct a mistake on an application.

Before signing any license or rating renewal application, verify that your own membership, ratings, and appointment as an S&TA are current.

USPA officials, including S&TAs, may not verify the requirements for renewing their own ratings.

### LICENSES

A USPA Instructor may administer the test and verify all qualifications for A, B, and C licenses, but a D license requires an S&TA or higher USPA official. Refer to the instructions for USPA skydiving licenses in the Skydiver's Information Manual for all license verifications.

### RATING RENEWALS

An S&TA or higher USPA official is required to verify renewal applications for instructional ratings and the PRO Rating. Refer to the renewal requirements for instructional ratings listed in the Introduction and Orientation section at the beginning of the training syllabus for each instructional rating and duplicated in "IRM Essentials," available for free on the USPA website at [www.uspa.org](http://www.uspa.org). For PRO rating and renewal, refer to the SIM section on the PRO rating.

Rating renewal instructions also appear on the standard USPA membership and rating renewal application.

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# FORMS

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