



ACQUISITION,  
TECHNOLOGY  
AND LOGISTICS

## THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

3010 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-3010

31 JAN 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS  
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
COMMANDER, UNITED STATES TRANSPORTATION  
COMMAND  
COMMANDER, UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS  
COMMAND

SUBJECT: Requirements for Airdrop Operations

Effective immediately, the requirement in Department of Defense (DoD) Directive 4500.53, "Commercial Air Transportation Quality and Safety Review Program," that all contracts for parachute jump operations be performed only by certificated air carriers is modified as outlined herein.

DoD approved certificated carriers must be used for all interstate operations. For all intrastate operations, DoD approved certificated carriers will be used if reasonably priced and reasonably available.

If DoD approved certificated carriers are not reasonably priced and reasonably available for intrastate operations, other commercial operators may be used that have been inspected by trained Service representatives and approved by the Service designated approval authority. United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) may conduct its own inspection program and designate an approval authority. If only commercial operators that have not been inspected provide offers, they may be used until January 31, 2005. After that date, only inspected commercial operators may be used in the United States if no DoD approved certificated carriers are not reasonably priced and reasonably available. Commercial operators that have been approved by the United States Parachute Association may be used in competitions.


The United States Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) will identify the minimum requirements that must be met by commercial operators. In addition, the following operating parameters apply:

- a. The operator must regularly engage in drops for hire to the general public



- b. The operator is experienced in conducting drops in the geographic area of the intended drop zone and must itself be based in the same geographic area.
- c. The drops will occur only during Visual Flight Rule (VFR) conditions.
- d. The operator will not engage in interstate air transportation during the mission

The Services' inspectors will train with the DoD Air Carrier Survey and Analysis Office (Headquarter, Air Mobility Command) or Service inspectors trained by that office prior to conducting their own inspections. Biennial inspections will be conducted of all Service approved commercial operators. Commercial operators inspected and approved for parachute jumps by one Service may be used by all. The Services and USSOCOM will make available to all DoD users a list of their approved commercial operators. Any commercial operator having a major accident will not be used until reinspected and approved by the appropriate authority. USTRANSCOM will biennially review the Service's programs for compliance with this direction.



E. C. Aldridge, Jr.