

Ethical Accountability in the Skydiving Community

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In skydiving, we trust our gear with our lives. We inspect, maintain, and upgrade it with precision. But beyond our equipment lies another system that demands equal attention: our ethics.

Every jump involves risk. Ethical decision-making helps manage that risk long before we board the plane. It guides how we:

- Speak up about unsafe practices
- Support newer jumpers without ego or exclusion
- Navigate conflicts with professionalism
- Represent our sport in public and online spaces

Skydiving relies on trust — in our gear, our instructors, our teammates, and our fellow skydivers. Ethical accountability reinforces that trust. It means owning our mistakes, reporting concerns, and supporting transparent processes for review and improvement. In Canada, our commitment to ethics strengthens our national programs, from safety management systems to inclusion initiatives. It ensures that our community reflects the values we want to pass on. When ethics are embedded in our culture, we create safer dropzones, stronger teams, and more inclusive communities.

Ethics also means recognizing who gets to feel safe, seen, and supported. Inclusion isn't optional, it's foundational. Ethical skydiving challenges bias, amplifies underrepresented voices, and ensures that every jumper has access to opportunity and respect.

When systemic abuse and ethical breakdown take root, trust is eroded, leaving individuals and communities vulnerable. These issues are not isolated incidents; they are patterns that persist when accountability is absent and silence is normalized.

Systemic abuse refers to recurring harm enabled by organizational structures, cultural norms, or power imbalances. In skydiving, this can manifest as:

- Abuse of authority: Coaches, instructors, or DZOs using their position to intimidate, manipulate, or exploit.
- Retaliation and silencing: Individuals who report misconduct facing backlash, exclusion, or reputational harm.
- Normalization of harm: Unsafe practices, bullying, or harassment dismissed as “just part of the sport.”
- Lack of oversight: Inadequate mechanisms for reporting, investigating, or addressing ethical violations.

Ethical breakdown occurs when the principles that should guide our sport ~ safety, respect, integrity ~ are compromised for convenience, ego, or profit. Examples include:

- Turning a blind eye to misconduct to protect reputations or revenue.
- Favoritism and exclusion in coaching, mentorship, or opportunities.
- Failure to act when safety concerns or ethical violations are raised.

This breakdown isn't just a leadership issue; it's a cultural one. When ethical lapses go unchecked, they become embedded in the fabric of our community. It's everyone's responsibility to uphold environments where people feel safe, respected, and empowered. As a skydiving community, we contribute by:

- Recognizing and challenging harmful behaviors, even when they're subtle or normalized
- Creating spaces where consent, boundaries, and psychological safety are non-negotiable
- Supporting survivors and whistleblowers with empathy and without judgement
- Promoting education and awareness about abuse prevention, power dynamics, and ethical leadership

Skydiving demands courage not just in the air, but on the ground; in how we lead, speak up, and stand together. Ethical integrity is not a side note to safety; it is its foundation. When we embed ethics into every layer of our sport, we create a culture where trust is earned, not assumed.

Systemic abuse and ethical breakdown are not inevitable. They are preventable when we choose transparency over silence, inclusion over hierarchy, and accountability over convenience. As a community, we have the opportunity and the responsibility to model a sport where every jumper is protected, respected, and empowered.

The CSPA Women's Initiative Committee (WIC), in addition to CSPA as a whole, is deeply committed to advancing a Culture of Safety that is inclusive, ethical, and proactive. Through advocacy, education, and community engagement, the committee works to ensure that safety is not only physical but psychological. By promoting ethical mentorship, amplifying diverse voices, and collaborating on national safety strategies, WIC is devoted to help shape environments where respect, consent, and accountability are non-negotiable. Our work reinforces that safety culture is not just about procedures; it's about people.

Written on behalf of the CSPA Women's Initiative Committee (WIC)