Parachutist can leap from aircraft high above the earth, knowing they will land in perfect safety a few minutes later. Heavy equipment can be pushed out of planes and brought to the ground, dangling beneath a cluster of parachutes, without damage. The resistance of the air cushion the fall-parachutes would be useless on the Moon, where there is on air.

A parachute is made of very light material, such as nylon, and has a very large area, so that is cannot move through the air fast once it has opened. It is connected by dozens of lines to the harness that the parachutist wears. There are different ways in which a parachute may be openou. Generally the parachutist pulls the ripcard cord that releases a small parachute called a drogue. Pulled by the rush of air, the small parachute drags the main parachute out of its pack. Immediately, the main parachute out of its pack. Immediately, the speed of the descending parachutist slows down, allowing skilled chutists to control very precisely where they land.

Another method of opening the parachute is to have the ripcord connected to a point in the aircraft, so that it is automatically pulled as the parachutist leaves the plane. This method is used in training.

When an airman fires himself from a crashing plane using his ejection seat, he does not have to open his parachute himself.