

## 2020 Fly Safe Messages

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## *Fly Safe Campaign*



Watch your fax or e-mail every other Monday in April, May, June and August and every Monday in July for scheduled issues. Supplemental messages may be sent when increased flight activity warrants additional safety awareness.

## **MAINTAIN ACCIDENT AWARENESS**

*Don't become a statistic!*

NTSB has reported 2 ag accidents so far this year with no fatal accidents.

## **FLY SAFE THIS SEASON FROM START TO FINISH**

Because of the essential importance of aerial application, operations are underway in many parts of the country and will soon start up throughout the rest of the nation. Now is the time to place safety at the top of your priorities. Think about this past season's PAASS program and how you can avoid having a CFIT (Controlled Flight Into Terrain) accident. Manage and limit cockpit distractions, focus on the job at hand and the pass in front of you, and don't fly if your attitude is such that your focus on safety is compromised. Do not let customers pressure you into taking jobs you feel are unsafe, and do not let them coerce you into flying in weather conditions that can lead to an accident or a drift incident.

Multiple fatal accident reports from the NTSB over the last several years, both agricultural and general aviation, have noted the presence of drugs in the deceased pilot's system. In some cases, the levels were not high enough to cause impairment. Other reports, including those for several ag aviation accidents, have drug related impairment listed as a contributing cause to the accident. Make sure the medications you are using are safe and legal for aviation. The FAA has prepared a no or no-go list of [over-the-counter medications](#).

As we continue to deal with the coronavirus pandemic, large numbers of aircraft may be needed near a coronavirus hot spot. As such it is possible a TFR could be used. Check TFRs frequently (see instructions below). Due to the pandemic, the FAA has indicated it will take [no enforcement action](#) against individuals with 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> class medical certificates expiring between March 31, 2020 to June 30, 2020. Check [here](#) for more coronavirus resources from NAAA.

## **Check Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs)**

Always check TFR NOTAMs before flying! Make sure you have proof of a preflight TFR briefing from sources such as FSS or <https://www.1800wxbrief.com>.

## **Make a "Fly Safe" Resolution Now!**

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## *Fly Safe Campaign*



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### **MAINTAIN ACCIDENT AWARENESS**

*Don't become a statistic!*

**NTSB has reported 2 ag accidents in 2020. There has been 1 fatal accident that has not yet been reported by NTSB.**

### **STAY VFR AND AVOID IMC!**

**Visual flight rules (VFR) into instrument meteorological conditions (IMC) can be a deadly encounter for ag pilots. VFR into IMC accidents are unfortunately a regular occurrence within the ag community. Here are three short term steps and three long term steps to help prevent a VFR into IMC situation.**

#### **Short Term Steps**

- 1. Educate yourself on weather patterns and weather information services within the area in which you are working.**
- 2. Obtain a weather briefing prior to flight for the areas in which you will be operating.**
- 3. Recognize and avoid pressure (external or self-induced) to fly in less than desirable weather conditions.**

#### **Long Term Steps**

- 1. Consider utilizing equipment, instruments, and technology that would aid if VFR conditions deteriorate and consider obtaining your instrument rating.**
- 2. Consider installing onboard weather equipment in the aircraft that gives you real-time updates on the weather conditions in your area.**
- 3. Operators are encouraged to implement a risk assessment program to afford all personnel a means to evaluate weather conditions in the operational area to determine if proceeding with the mission is safe, or if flight operations should be delayed in order to preclude a possible VFR into IMC sequence.**

**Taking a few extra steps to prevent a VFR into IMC is certainly worth your time as an ag pilot. You will live to fly another day and your loved ones will thank you!**

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## **MAINTAIN ACCIDENT AWARENESS**

*Don't become a statistic!*

**NTSB has reported 3 ag accidents including 1 fatal accident so far this year.**

## **COLLISIONS WITH OBSTACLES CONTINUE TO TAKE THE LIVES OF AGRICULTURAL AVIATORS**

**Two of the three accidents reported by the NTSB so far in 2020 are Controlled Flight Into Terrain Accidents (CFIT), including the one fatal accident. CFIT accidents include collision with the ground as well as obstacles attached to the ground, such as power poles, wires, towers, and trees. While the NTSB reports for these three accidents are not yet final, the objects struck include a tree and a metal bracket on top of power pole. From 2010 to 2019, 31% of all ag aviation accidents and 53% of fatal ag aviation accidents were CFIT.**

**In many CFIT accidents, the obstacle struck by the ag aviator was a known object. For example, tower guy wires that were identified during the reconnaissance phase but then were lost track of during a pass. In other CFIT accidents, the obstacles, most often wires, were unseen by the pilot until the accident. In some of these cases, field scouting was not conducted adequately.**

**Scout all your fields thoroughly, even if you've recently sprayed them. If a particular obstacle bothers you, investigate it further, even if it means delaying the application. If someone else at your operation has flown a field before, ask them about obstacles and how they flew the field to avoid them. Do not let your desire to make money rush you – stay focused on the task at hand. Be wary of cockpit distractions and do not divert your attention while you are in a pass. The more distractions you have, the more likely you are to lose track of an obstacle.**

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## ***Fly Safe Campaign***



### **MAINTAIN ACCIDENT AWARENESS**

***Don't become a statistic!***

**NTSB has reported 5 ag accidents including 1 fatal accident so far this year.**

### **A FIRE-RESISTANT FLIGHT SUIT CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE – START WEARING ONE TODAY**

As professional agricultural aviators, you should use any and all available safety equipment to protect yourself and have the greatest chance of surviving an accident. While the majority of agricultural aviators now wear helmets and securely fasten their aircraft's seat belt and harness, one piece of safety equipment that is not as commonplace is a fire-resistant flight suit. Nomex<sup>®</sup>, the material that flight suits are made of, can provide protection against a fire, which could mean the difference between surviving an accident or succumbing to injuries.

From 2010 to 2019, 11% of agricultural aviation accidents involved a fire. Of those accidents where a fire occurred, 41% resulted in a fatality. The one fatal accident in 2020 so far involved a post impact fire that consumed a majority of the fuselage. There is no guarantee that a fire-resistant flight suit would have prevented those deaths. But if having a flight suit gives you an increased chance of surviving an accident, why not wear one?

Nomex<sup>®</sup> is fire resistant, which means that it will burn when a flame is held to it, but as soon as that flame is removed, Nomex<sup>®</sup> will stop burning. It is also a poor conductor of heat and will not melt or drip. A [video](#) demonstrating the difference between Nomex<sup>®</sup> IIIA, cotton, and polycotton blend reveal just how well it works to protect the wearer from flames. PAASS urges you to purchase and wear a fire-resistant flight suit to increase your chances of surviving an accident.

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## ***Fly Safe Campaign***



### **MAINTAIN ACCIDENT AWARENESS**

***Don't become a statistic!***

**NTSB has reported 5 ag accidents including 1 fatal accident so far this year.**

### **WE ARE ESSENTIAL. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AND YOUR CREW TO REMAIN ESSENTIAL!**

NAAA helped ensure the agricultural aviation industry was declared essential during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. While this means the industry can continue protecting crops, forests, and public health throughout the nation, great attention also must be given to protecting yourself and crew from COVID-19. Contraction of the virus at an aerial application business could have significant negative repercussions on employee(s) health, the business' well-being and the customers crops.

While the vast majority of the population will show little or no effects from the disease, a small percentage can become quite ill. If this were to happen to you, it is doubtful you would be able to fly safely or manage your operation effectively. The situation would be difficult for an operation with several aircraft and almost impossible for a single aircraft operation due to isolation protocols to follow if contracting the disease or exposed to one that has contracted it (see CDC, specific [guidelines](#) to follow). Even if you have no symptoms, someone familiar with your test results, such as a county health official, could make conducting your work difficult by threatening a license you need or attempting to hamper your work in other ways.

NAAA has prepared a COVID-19 prevention and management [resource](#) based on guidance from the CDC. Review the information and learn how to keep yourself and your fellow essential workers healthy and working. Your customers, family, and the nation are counting on you to perform your essential duties.

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## ***Fly Safe Campaign***



### **MAINTAIN ACCIDENT AWARENESS**

***Don't become a statistic!***

**NTSB has reported 6 ag accidents including 1 fatal accident so far this year.**

### **FERRY ABOVE FIVE (HUNDRED) AND STAY ALIVE!**

As your season picks up, do not forget the PAASS ferry safety motto: ferry above five (hundred) and stay alive! Ferrying above 500 feet significantly reduces the chances of a mid-air collision with other ag aircraft working a field in your area. It also likely positions the aircraft above towers and cross-country power lines and gives additional time and altitude for decision making in case of an engine or aircraft malfunction. Last but not least, a higher ferrying altitude reduces potential complaints to the FAA.

Over the last 10 years there have been four mid-air collisions involving agricultural aircraft. In two of those mid-air, one of the pilots in each accident was killed. In a 2019 mid-air collision involving two Ag Cats seeding rice, both pilots were fatally injured.

In some areas of the country, fields are close enough to the strip that 500 feet cannot be attained. In these situations, perhaps a common radio frequency agreed upon by all operators in the vicinity might work to increase communication and reduce the risk of a mid-air. A better option is the installation and use of ADS-B In. This technology, if adopted by everyone in the area, can warn you when you're near another aircraft. It can be set up to provide audible warnings when aircraft enter your proximity – it does not require you to actively monitor a screen. ADS-B may also reduce your risk of colliding with a UAV, [many of which will now be equipped with ADS-B](#).

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## ***Fly Safe Campaign***



### **MAINTAIN ACCIDENT AWARENESS**

***Don't become a statistic!***

**NTSB has reported 7 ag accidents including 1 fatal accident so far this year.**

### **IS THIS DISTRACTING?**

Distractions play a role in many ag aviation accidents. A loss of focus and concentration for even a split second in the ag flying environment can lead to an accident. The NTSB has listed "Eliminate Distractions" as their top item on their Most Wanted List of needed safety improvements for all modes of transportation including aviation, highway, marine, and railroad.

Any communication device can be tempting to use at inadvertent times because of the pressure to continue conducting business in today's face-paced environment. [Current federal regulations](#) allow cell phone use in an aircraft on the ground but not while airborne. A [white paper by the National Safety Council](#) on distracted driving reveals that hands-free devices, while often thought of as a safe alternative to handheld use, do not eliminate cognitive distraction and offer no real safety benefit. It is the distraction caused by the conversation, not the device, that can lead to an accident, whether in a car, ag aircraft, or other vehicle.

The NTSB has specifically noted inflight cell phone use and diverted attention to GPS in certain fatal ag aviation accident reports. There are many devices inside the cockpit that can cause a distraction but are work related and necessary to completing your mission. Make sure you think about how to use them safely before you divert your attention to them. If you need to communicate or figure out an issue with your GPS, climb to a safe altitude in an area free of obstructions. If at all possible, save the task until you are on the ground where it can receive your undivided attention without risking your life.

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## ***Fly Safe Campaign***



### **MAINTAIN ACCIDENT AWARENESS**

***Don't become a statistic!***

**NTSB has reported 8 ag accidents including 1 fatal accident so far this year.**

### **ON TARGET – WHERE CUSTOMERS AND THEIR NEIGHBORS ONLY WANT YOU TO SPRAY**

No effort must be spared to keep aerial applications on target. Drift mitigation means your customers are getting all of the chemical they paid for on the crop they need protected, and surrounding sites are protected from drift. Start by selecting and operating nozzles based on the label recommended droplet size. You can determine the droplet size for your nozzle setup using the [USDA-ARS AATRU Droplet Size Models](#). Consider adjuvants and their impact on droplet size and drift potential.

Weather is another major factor in drift mitigation. Avoid spraying during temperature inversions, which cause many drift incidents every year. Inversions allow very small spray droplets to hang in the air and travel long distances before settling down off-target. Inversions usually occur early in the morning and late in the afternoon into the evening. Very calm winds are often a sign an inversion may be present. Avoid spraying when wind speeds get above the labeled wind speed limit or when winds are blowing strongly towards sensitive, off-target areas.

Check to see what is adjacent to all sides of your application site. Use [FieldWatch](#) to assist in identifying nearby sensitive crops and apiaries. Ensure no labor crews are working too close to the target field and determine if an adjacent crop is tolerant to herbicides and if so, which ones. When working near a particularly sensitive site, consider using a shortened spray boom to further reduce the spray entering your wingtip vortices. Drift misapplications can be costly, increase insurance premiums, risk license suspension and blacken the industry's eye.

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## ***Fly Safe Campaign***



### **MAINTAIN ACCIDENT AWARENESS**

***Don't become a statistic!***

**NTSB has reported 12 ag accidents including 1 fatal accident so far this year. There have been 2 fatal accidents not yet reported by NTSB.**

### **LOW TIME IN AIRCRAFT TYPE INCREASES RISK**

Agricultural aviation accident statistics have revealed that those pilots who have low time in the type of aircraft they are flying are at significantly higher risk for having an accident. Of the total number of accidents from 2006 to 2015, 39% occurred with pilots having less than 500 hours in the accident aircraft. Pilots with less than 100 hours in the aircraft accident made up 14% of those total accidents. This increase in accidents is seen for both new and experienced pilots.

While overall experience is always a positive thing, you will still be at a disadvantage when you start in a new aircraft no matter how many hours you have. As an example, one pilot had 35,000 total time but only 250 hours in the aircraft in which he had the accident. This can especially be true when the new aircraft you're flying is faster and heavier than your previous aircraft. Differences in how controls are laid out can take time for your mind to adjust to. Muscle memory doesn't develop overnight, so when you first transition to a new aircraft you will need to be thinking more about where things are located in the cockpit and adjusting to the feel of the controls.

If the aircraft has a GPS system in which you are unfamiliar, that too can increase the time it takes to get to understand it. It can also cause a distraction if you are forced to break your concentration in order to figure something out or to fix. When you switch aircraft, increase your concentration and give yourself more time to react. If something is especially distracting, gain some altitude, or better yet land, before you attempt to resolve the issue.

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## ***Fly Safe Campaign***



### **MAINTAIN ACCIDENT AWARENESS**

***Don't become a statistic!***

**NTSB has reported 13 ag accidents including 2 fatal accidents so far this year. There has been 1 fatal accident not yet reported by NTSB.**

### **DON'T LET FATIGUE RUIN YOUR SEASON – TAKE PRECAUTIONS TO RECOGNIZE AND STOP IT**

The busiest time of the year for agricultural aviation is quickly approaching. Make sure you are doing everything you can to fight fatigue. This includes recognizing you may not be the best judge of how fatigued you really are. It may not be apparent to you until serious errors are made, which could likely mean it's too late to prevent an accident. If you find you have a loss of accuracy and smoothness of controlled movements or you're preoccupied with one task at the exclusion of others, you are already fatigued.

It is important to empower members of the ground/office crew to not only watch pilots for signs of fatigue, but to also speak up when they see those signs and tell the pilot to step away from the aircraft and rest. Learn the symptoms of fatigue and pass that knowledge on to all personnel at your operation. These include not processing details, sloppy performance, slowed reaction times, and impaired short-term memory.

Make sure you're taking care of yourself in other ways to assist in battling fatigue. Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated. When it's time for rest, eliminate all distractions. Avoid using your phone or other electronic devices when getting ready for sleep. Research has shown the light emitted from the screens suppresses the production of melatonin, the hormone that controls your circadian rhythm. For more information read NAAA's [Combating Fatigue in Ag Aviation brochure](#). And remember – need a nap, take a nap. No job is worth your life.

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## ***Fly Safe Campaign***



### **MAINTAIN ACCIDENT AWARENESS** ***Don't become a statistic!***

**NTSB has reported 14 ag accidents including 2 fatal accidents so far this year. There has been 1 fatal accident not yet reported by NTSB.**

### **PROTECT YOUR VISION IN THE EVENT OF A BIRD OR UAV STRIKE – KEEP YOUR VISOR DOWN**

A recent [safety video by Helicopter Association International \(HAI\)](#) has a good message that applies to all ag aviators, whether you fly fixed-wing aircraft or helicopters – keep your helmet visor down whenever you're in flight. It can protect your face and most importantly your eyes and vision in the event of a bird strike. While it may not be as effective if a UAV penetrates your cockpit, a visor would still provide more protection to your eyes than having nothing at all over your face.

If a bird or UAV does come through your cockpit it could easily strike your face. With no visor to protect you, your eyes would likely get debris in them. This could result in a range of potential vision problems, the worst being permanent vision lost. Even if it's only temporary vision loss until your eyes can clear the material, losing your vision even for a short period at low altitude and/or while conducting an aerial application presents a very serious safety hazard.

HAI advises that while sunglasses will help your vision in sunlight, they won't do much to protect your eyes in the event of an object penetrating your cockpit. The use of tinted visors has other safety advantages. The most obvious is improved vision in bright sunlight. In addition, they can protect your eyes from the chronic effects of UV exposure elongating your hawk-eye ag aviation career. Most helmets can easily be equipped to have two visors, so you can utilize a clear one when you don't need protection from sunlight. There is no reason not to have a visor down at all times when you're conducting ag operations – see safe, fly safe!

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### **MAINTAIN ACCIDENT AWARENESS**

***Don't become a statistic!***

**NTSB has reported 17 ag accidents including 3 fatal accidents so far this year. There has been 1 fatal accident not yet reported by NTSB.**

### **WIRES CAN BE ANYWHERE – COMMUNICATE, SCOUT, AND KEEP YOUR GUARD UP**

Wire strikes continue to be a leading cause of ag aviation accidents. While most involve a power line, a fatal accident in June is a stark reminder that wires can be anywhere. The [NTSB's preliminary report](#) indicates the pilot struck a “dove wire” used to attract birds for hunting. The wire was mounted on a 40-foot pole with a hunting stand and ran 250 feet across the full width of the center of the corn field into trees bordering the other side. This was the first time the pilot had sprayed the field, so he had talked with the landowner beforehand to discuss any hazards and it appears the wires in question weren't mentioned. Two flyovers were conducted prior to spraying.

Always have a plan in place with a checklist as to how you will determine if dangerous obstructions are present in the fields you are treating, including a detailed conversation with the landowner/farmer. Make sure you ask specific questions because the farmer likely does not fully comprehend the dangers certain obstructions might present. Instead of asking about hazards in general, ask specifically about the number and location of power lines, poles of any kind, towers, irrigation equipment, and any other type of obstructions including hunting stands and wires.

During your reconnaissance and while making the application, continuously scan for both wires and poles. If you see a pole, assume there is a wire present. If you see something that you can't quite make out, hold off making the application until you've had a chance to investigate. Equip your aircraft with all available wire cutters and deflectors to give yourself the best chance of surviving if you do hit a wire.

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### **MAINTAIN ACCIDENT AWARENESS**

***Don't become a statistic!***

**NTSB has reported 21 ag accidents including 5 fatal accidents so far this year. There has been 1 fatal accident not yet reported by NTSB.**

### **KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR FIELD WORKERS**

Corn fungicide applications are occurring across much of the country. It is important to remember you, as an ag pilot, are not the only one who visits in or around these fields this time of year. Whatever crop you are treating and wherever you're spraying, make every effort to locate workers present in and adjacent to the fields. Develop a communication plan with growers and seed companies to ensure up-to-date information is being shared about where field workers are located, and where you plan to be flying. [FieldWatch](#) launched a pilot program called [SeedFieldCheck](#) in Iowa for 2020 (possibly for additional states in 2021) designed to track seed field workers.

When you're surveying fields for obstructions, keep an eye out for field workers and signs of their presence such as trucks, buses, and portable toilets. For an aerial applicator involved in such an incident there is the risk of a violation, associated fines, and potential loss of an applicators license, as well as the possibility of a lawsuit from everyone accidentally sprayed. For the ag aviation industry as a whole these incidents are a black eye that frequently lead to a great deal of bad publicity. It is not easy to convince your local residents that aerial application is safe when the first thing that comes to their mind about ag aviation is a story about field workers getting sprayed.

Even if you feel the weather conditions will protect workers in a nearby field from drift, you may be better off waiting until they've left the area before you spray the target field. An alleged incident in Idaho resulted in a great deal of negative media, including a lengthy newspaper article that tried to imply the aerial applicator drifted on the workers despite all evidence proving that such drift was impossible.

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### **MAINTAIN ACCIDENT AWARENESS**

***Don't become a statistic!***

**NTSB has reported 23 ag accidents including 5 fatal accidents so far this year. There have been 2 fatal accidents not yet reported by NTSB.**

### **PAASS FATALITIES SLIDE FULL**

**PAASS must inform you that the fatal accident slide used annually during the PAASS program is too full for 2020. Ag pilots may absolutely only fly and apply safely and be completely accident free for the remainder of the season. This accident prohibition is non-negotiable.**

One thing you can do to prevent yourself from being the next person who succumbs to burns sustained in ag accident this year is to wear a Nomex flight suit. You are also forbidden from doing any aircraft maneuvers to show off, such as buzzing someone or performing aerobatics. You are flying an ag aircraft, not an Extra or a Pitts. If there is anything negatively impacting your ability to fly safely, such as spray material coating your windshield and restricting your visibility, do not take-off.

Similarly, if you wish to break your friends and family's hearts by not coming home from a day's work because you didn't have time to turn safely—those turns will never again be allowed. We do not apologize for this mandate. For a review of how to make safe turns, please watch NAAREF's Stall Spin Avoidance video on our [Safety and Education Videos page](#). Keep a constant watch out for obstacles and when applying to a new site verify with property owners about all potential hazards – trees, wires, poles, towers. Do not allow any distractions to take your attention off flying safely.

It's been a deadly July and we are all tired of losing friends and loved ones. Please fly safe for your family, friends, and fellow ag aviation professionals who wish to catch up with you at the end of the season. It's already a small industry. You don't need to make it smaller. There will be no more error allowed!

### **Check Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs)**

Always check TFR NOTAMs before flying! Make sure you have proof of a preflight TFR briefing from sources such as FSS or <https://www.1800wxbrief.com>.

### **Make a "Fly Safe" Resolution Now!**

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## ***Fly Safe Campaign***



### **MAINTAIN ACCIDENT AWARENESS**

***Don't become a statistic!***

**NTSB has reported 28 ag accidents including 6 fatal accidents so far this year. There have been 2 fatal accidents not yet reported by NTSB.**

### **WIND FARM ROPES ARE HIDDEN DANGERS; SO ARE MAKING BAD DECISIONS COMPLETELY UNRELATED TO THE MISSION**

A 2019 accident highlights two safety concerns: ropes in wind farms and buzzing people. An [NTSB accident report](#) details how a pilot intentionally flew at a low altitude past the wind turbine that he believed his friend was working on. The airplane's right wing struck a rope attached to one of the wind turbine blades that was being held by a worker on the ground. The worker was thrown 20 feet and suffered several broken vertebrae and a broken leg. The aircraft suffered minor damage and the pilot was not injured.

Ropes are used when working on wind turbines to help secure loads and blades. Workers use rappelling and safety ropes to descend down turbines. Whether you are flying within a wind farm or turning within one, make sure to scout for dangers in addition to the turbines, particularly dangers directly adjacent to them. Signs workers may be present using ropes include turbines not revolving where others are, and trucks parked near any of the turbines. If you see these signs, allow a minimum of 200 feet of clearance. It will be difficult to see the ropes themselves, and during windy days they can get blown a considerable distance from the turbine.

In addition, absolutely, positively do not buzz people. Pilots are dying and people are getting critically injured to no purpose. If you feel the need to prove your superior aviation skills, PAASS suggests completing all of your work in a safe and professional manner and hugging your family when you make it home safely each night.

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## ***Fly Safe Campaign***



### **MAINTAIN ACCIDENT AWARENESS**

***Don't become a statistic!***

**NTSB has reported 31 ag accidents including 7 fatal accidents so far this year. There has been 1 fatal accident not yet reported by NTSB.**

### **BEWARE OF MIXTURES IN YOUR HOPPER – UNKNOWN COMBINATIONS CAN BE DEADLY**

A recent fatal accident highlights the dangers that certain product combinations can create. An ag pilot had a problem with solution foaming out of the hopper and covering his windshield. He had returned once to the airport to add more defoamer in an attempt to correct the issue. Unfortunately, he was unsuccessful and subsequently crashed after taking off again. The [preliminary NTSB report](#) provides more details including the contents of the spray mixture. The pilot survived the accident only to later succumb to his injuries, which may have been linked to the contents of the spray mixture.

Many crop consultants like to recommend complex tank mixtures of various pesticides, fertilizers, and adjuvants. You may have sprayed some of the individual products before, but not the exact combination being requested. If you're unsure of how the mixture will react, do a jar test to verify compatibility. Foaming, toxic fumes, exothermic reactions, physical and other chemical incompatibilities may result. Tank cleaning agents that have not been thoroughly rinsed from the hopper may also contribute to dangerous chemical reactions.

Labels should provide warnings for any known issues when using the product. Manufacturers, however, may not be aware of every combination in which their product might be used. Read the labels, and if you have any questions, reach out to your local company representatives to get those questions answered before you fly. A pilot overloaded an aircraft last week but was stopped by his operator before takeoff because of concerns about excessive foaming. Don't let spray mixtures lead to an accident.

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## ***Fly Safe Campaign***



### **MAINTAIN ACCIDENT AWARENESS**

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**NTSB has reported 31 ag accidents including 7 fatal accidents so far this year. There has been 1 fatal accident not yet reported by NTSB.**

### **SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS DIVERTING ATTENTION AND PAINTING BAD IMAGE OF AG AVIATION INDUSTRY**

A recent social media post showed a complete disregard for safety. It is clear from the video that the pilot made a sweep of his cockpit with his phone while in an application pass. Not only is this a major distraction, it is completely unnecessary. There are already many distractions that are related to your mission. To add one that is not required is a major risk. The [July 13th Fly Safe](#) described a fatal accident involving a helicopter striking a bird wire that the landowner had failed to mention to the pilot. With obstacles such as that out there, spending time with a phone filming a spray pass could quickly turn in to an NTSB investigation team filming the scene of a fatal ag aviation accident.

Other recent social media posts attempting to disparage one type of aerial application in favor of the other only serve to make the entire industry look bad. It is understandable to passionately defend your preferred aircraft type. Posting images online, however, that show unsafe and ineffective applications for any ag aviation aircraft type makes everyone look bad. It promotes the entire industry as unprofessional and ineffective.

When the EPA, FAA, or other federal or state agency decide to regulate the aerial application industry, they do not separate between fixed wing and helicopters. Many growers, crop consultants, and other agricultural experts are already misinformed about the effectiveness of aerial applications. As an industry we should be highlighting our efficacy, safety, and successes, not airing our dirty laundry. Remember: upon the performance of each rests the fate of all.

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## ***Fly Safe Campaign***



### **MAINTAIN ACCIDENT AWARENESS**

***Don't become a statistic!***

**NTSB has reported 34 ag accidents including 8 fatal accidents so far this year. There has been 1 fatal accident not yet reported by NTSB.**

### **DON'T LET COMPLACENCY RUIN YOUR SEASON**

A recent accident serves as a reminder to ag aviators about how complacency can quickly lead to a crash. The pilot had changed his oil the morning of the accident before taking off with his first load. He had a specific routine he followed when changing his oil, but on that morning, he was in a hurry and altered this routine. It resulted in him forgetting to put his oil cap back on. As soon as he took off, oil began to cover his windshield. He was unable to see and subsequently had a forced landing in a nearby cornfield as he attempted to return to the airstrip.

The pilot admits to being overly complacent and diverting from his normal, safe routine. Complacency happens, but it is not an excuse. According to aviation human factors experts, complacency is caused by the very things that should prevent accidents, such as experience, training, and knowledge. They define it as “a mental state where an aviator acts, unaware of actual danger or deficiencies.” Signs of complacency include accepting lower work performance, increased boredom and inattention to tasks, not wanting to remain knowledgeable about work, increased feeling of well-being even as your workload builds, and neglecting important safety protocols.

To counter complacency, keep yourself aware of ag aviation accidents as a reminder of the consequences of complacency. Go through contingency checklists aloud as a means of avoiding hearing and seeing only what you expect to hear and see. Train recurrently to constantly improve your skills and refresh your knowledge. Critique your performance in order to foster self-improvement and development. Abide by your personal safety minimums always. Pay attention! Don't get complacent.

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## ***Fly Safe Campaign***



### **MAINTAIN ACCIDENT AWARENESS**

***Don't become a statistic!***

**NTSB has reported 38 ag accidents including 8 fatal accidents so far this year. There has been 1 fatal accident not yet reported by NTSB.**

### **GENDER REVEALS ARE ILLEGAL IN AG AVIATION**

Over the last several years there has been an increase in the number of times an agricultural aircraft is used for a gender reveal party. Some might view these incidents as harmless and exciting events that can showcase the skills of an ag pilot and the impressiveness of the airplane. In reality it is illegal and shows a willingness to take unnecessary risks and compromise safety in an attempt to show off. It endangers both the pilot and the participants and can bring unwanted media attention that reflects poorly on the aerial application industry. Last year a crash occurred on a gender reveal flight with an unauthorized passenger sitting with the pilot in his own seat.

To reiterate, when you use your ag aircraft to participate in a gender reveal, you are also violating the FARs. Restricted ag aircraft are restricted category for agricultural use only, and Part 137 exemptions apply only when performing ag operations. When you participate in a gender reveal you are operating under Part 91 and thus in violation of the prohibition of operating below 500 feet above the surface and closer than 500 feet to people.

As mentioned, an [accident last September](#) highlights how dangerous participating in a gender reveal can be. The aircraft stalled after the pilot dumped 350 gallons of pink water and subsequently crashed, causing substantial damage to the airplane. Note that the NTSB classified the flight as being conducted under Part 91, not Part 137. The pilot had a second person in the cockpit, a further violation of the FARs. The accident made national news, causing embarrassment for the industry. Think safe, act safe, fly safe, represent the industry professionally.

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## ***Fly Safe Campaign***



### **MAINTAIN ACCIDENT AWARENESS**

***Don't become a statistic!***

**NTSB has reported 43 ag accidents including 9 fatal accidents so far this year.**

### **FINISH SAFE AND APPLY COVER CROPS WELL**

The season is slowing down in many parts of the country. As your workload eases up, don't ease up on safety. Accidents can occur anytime, not just when you are busy. Over the prior 10 years, there has been an average of 8.6 accidents during the last 4 months of the year. This is 13% of the average number of accidents over those 10 years. An average of 9% of fatal ag accidents over those same 10 years have occurred between September and December. While the NTSB is still investigating the 2020 fatal accidents, it appears that several of them are turn related. If you think you need to conduct the fastest turns in the industry, you are wrong. For proof please watch NAAREF's [Stall Spin Avoidance video](#).

It is also cover crop season, which can be a very visible example of the quality of work that can be done with an ag aircraft. If the application is done uniformly then the example is a positive one. The grower will be pleased and more likely to utilize aerial application for other application services. Other growers may also see the work and be impressed with the quality. If the cover crop application is nonuniform and poorly formed, then the grower is likely not to be pleased and may share his experience with other growers.

For more detailed information on applying cover crops, NAAA members can view the cover crops presentation from the 2017 NAAA Ag Aviation Expo by visiting the [NAAA Resource Center](#). The argument over the quality of work done by ground applicators versus aerial applicators is one that will not end anytime soon, especially if we provide the other side with evidence to support the argument that ground is the better option. Upon the performance of each rests the fate of all.

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