

Checklist for Pilots Subjected to Discharge of a Firearm Targeting an Ag Aircraft

If you or a pilot of yours is shot at while operating an ag aircraft, undoubtedly one of the main things going through your mind after the initial shock subsides is what to do and who to call to report the shooting. NAAA has prepared a checklist on how to respond in the event someone discharges a firearm at your aircraft. Follow these steps.

1. Inform Local Law Enforcement

While the laws vary from state to state, you should immediately report to your local law enforcement agency that someone has shot at your aircraft, *even if your aircraft is not hit*. Depending on the state, an individual discharging a firearm at an aircraft could be charged with anything from the negligent discharge of a firearm to attempted murder. It's important to contact the enforcement body with jurisdiction over the locality where the offense occurred. The sooner you can contact law enforcement, the better chance of apprehending the shooter.

2. Contact the FBI

Be sure to file a report with the FBI regional office for your area. The contact information for the regional office is available at [fbi.gov/contact-us/field-offices](https://www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field-offices). In addition to state laws, it is a federal crime to shoot at aircraft, including shooting at UAVs. Make sure authorities know what specific laws were violated by citing title 18 of U.S. Code, section 32, which specifically states it is illegal to "set fire to, damage, destroy, disable, or wreck any aircraft. The section also states it is illegal to "interfere with or disable, with intent to endanger the safety of any person or with a reckless disregard for the safety of human life, anyone engaged in the authorized operation of such aircraft." Penalties can be as severe as 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Even the threat of shooting down an aircraft can get you five years in prison.

3. Report it to the FAA National Safety Hotline

After safely landing, you should report the incident by calling the FAA Safety Hotline at 1-800-255-1111 or online at hotline.faa.gov. This contact is a single avenue for anyone from FAA employees to concerned citizens to file a report regarding violations of federal aviation regulations or the safety of the national airspace.

4. Call your Local Flight Standards Office (FSO)

Your local Flight Standards Office (formerly called FSDO) consists of aviation officials who are your local contact to the FAA. While local law enforcement and the FBI take care of criminal matters, be sure your local FSO is given details on the incident.

5. File a NASA Aviation Safety Report

The primary purpose of a NASA aviation safety report is to collect data related to the national airspace to reduce aviation accidents and incidents. Your confidential and non-punitive report will go directly into the Aviation Safety Reporting System (ASRS), ensuring your experience will be used as data to contribute to aviation safety. The incident information can be recorded on the [General Report Form](#) for electronic submission, or the form can be printed for completion and mailing by U.S. mail.

6. Tell Other Pilots

Whether it's through social media, message boards, email or word of mouth, let other pilots in your area know when and where the incident occurred. Highlighting your experience can help other pilots maintain some extra situational awareness when flying in the area.

7. Notify Local News Media

Share your encounter and safety concerns with the local media to inform the non-piloting public of these same concerns, as well as the penalties associated with willfully shooting at an aircraft. Getting your story out could help catch the perpetrator if the suspected shooter has not been apprehended and might make someone else think twice before discharging a firearm at an aircraft.

8. Contact Your Insurance Agent if ...

In the event physical damage is done to your aircraft, contact your insurance agent. The company will ensure repairs are made to the aircraft in accordance with your policy. There is a possibility the insurance company could pursue action against the parties that may be liable for the loss.

In addition to the shooting-response checklist, NAAA is always available for additional assistance in the event of an ag aircraft shooting incident. Contact NAAA at (202) 546-5722.