

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 1st, 2nd, or 3rd 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!

To be removed from the "Fly Safe" fax list, please call 202-546-5722 or e-mail information@agaviation.org. Let us know if you wish to be removed only from these Fly Safe messages or all faxes or e-mails from the NAAA.

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MAINTAIN ACCIDENT AWARENESS

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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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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[®], 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[®] 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[®] will stop burning. It is also a poor conductor of heat and will not melt or drip. A [video](#) demonstrating the difference between Nomex[®] 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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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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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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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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