

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.

2023 SEASON HELICOPTER AG ACCIDENTS CONTINUE TO BE HIGH

At this point in the 2023 season a high percentage of the ag accidents reported by NTSB involved a helicopter. Recent FAA survey data suggests helicopters represent around 23% of the fleet and account for 20% of the ag hours flown. These fleet percentages are far below the 38% of ag accidents that involved a helicopter so far in 2023. FAA survey data and NTSB accident reports show that from 2012 to 2021, helicopters accounted for 16.8% of the total ag hours flown but 28.4% of the total ag accidents. Helicopter and fixed wing operators should all be cognizant of the dangers involved in ag aviation and keep the focus on safety.

Helicopters can be especially useful when working around wind turbine farms, small fields, and confined areas with numerous obstructions. However, that does not make them immune from these obstructions. In 2022, 55% of the wire strike accidents involved helicopters. No matter what aircraft type you're flying, you must conduct a thorough reconnaissance of the application site and keep those hazards in your mind during the entire application. Don't allow distractions to take your focus off wires and other hazards, and don't let your confidence in the safety of your application platform lull you into a false sense of security.

Helicopters require more maintenance than fixed-wing aircraft and it should not be postponed. When training new ag helicopter pilots, it's imperative to consider the pilot's experience and background. Ensure the pilot is well trained on all situations they may encounter. Gradually increase the difficulty of the fields they are assigned. An inexperienced and poorly trained helicopter pilot is not safe in a wired-up field just because they're in a helicopter. For both helicopter and fixed-wing pilots, there is no substitute for competent mentorship on how to safely make aerial applications.

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!