

Fly Safe Campaign



MAINTAIN ACCIDENT AWARENESS

Don't become a statistic!

NTSB has reported 30 ag accidents including 3 fatal accidents so far this year. There have been 2 fatal accidents not yet reported by NTSB bringing the total to 5 fatal accidents.

NUMEROUS WIRE STRIKE AND HELICOPTER ACCIDENTS INCLUDING TWO FATALITIES IN JULY

While NTSB has not finished investigating all 2023 accidents, July once again saw an uptick in ag accidents. Initial reports suggest that 70% of the July accidents reported by NTSB were likely wire strike accidents. Furthermore, 80% of the July accidents involved helicopters. Recent FAA survey data suggests helicopters represent around 23% of the fleet and account for 20% of the ag hours flown. Of the seven wire strike accidents in July, six involved helicopters. Two recent helicopter accidents were fatal. At least one of those fatalities was a wire strike, and at this point it appears the other was as well. In at least one of those accidents, it appears the pilot struck a wire they were aware of, having flown over it several times before the accident. There was also a fatal wire strike accident involving a fixed-wing aircraft in July.

No matter how busy you are, take the time to properly scout every field thoroughly for wires and other obstructions. Most importantly, do not allow yourself to become distracted and forget about wires. If you're an operator, pay close attention to the experience, number of distractions, and fatigue level of your pilots. Do not push them to treat fields with numerous obstructions they're not ready for and try to limit the distractions they are exposed to while they are flying.

For helicopter pilots, remember that just because you can get close to wires and other obstructions doesn't always mean you should. If a customer asks you to spray a field that you aren't comfortable with because of wires, other obstructions, or even an adjacent sensitive sight that would demand a great deal of your attention during an application, say no or consider incorporating a drone into your operation to do tight work. No job or customer is worth your life. If you survive, you will still be out of an aircraft until you can repair or replace the one damaged in the accident. Which will be more costly – turning down one field or losing an aircraft for the rest of the season? Look for and remember wires every flight, no matter how busy you are.

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!

Watch your e-mail every other Monday in April and May and every Monday in June, July, and August for scheduled issues. Supplemental messages may be sent when additional safety awareness is warranted. Please call 202-546-5722 or e-mail information@agaviation.org if you wish to be removed only from these Fly Safe messages or all e-mails from the NAAA.