

Fly Safe Campaign



MAINTAIN ACCIDENT AWARENESS

Don't become a statistic!

NTSB has reported 2 ag accidents so far this year.

MAKE AVOIDING WIRE STRIKES ACCIDENTS A TOP PRIORITY IN YOUR 2024 SEASON

As activity increases throughout the country, now is a good time to focus on safety. A top concern must be avoiding wire strike accidents. Wire strikes caused 28% of the ag aviation accidents in 2023, and eight pilots lost their lives last year after hitting a wire. Throughout your 2024 season, no matter how busy you get, you cannot allow anything to take your focus off wires and other obstacles in the fields you treat.

Before applying to fields you've treated for years, resist the temptation to rush your reconnaissance efforts. Instead of assuming nothing has changed in those fields, you must start with the assumption there has been a change until a thorough reconnaissance proves otherwise. It's best to conduct a minimum of two complete orbits around the field in opposite directions. Background and light conditions impact your ability to identify obstructions, so making the orbits in different directions changes how you view the site and provides a greater opportunity to see hidden structures. Wires must be treated as invisible hazards while scouting a field due the difficulty of seeing them in many environments. Instead of looking for the wires themselves, you must look for structures and read the hardware that will identify the location of wires, even if you can't see them.

A focus group study examining ag wire strike accidents conducted by the FAA at NAAA's 2022 Ag Aviation Expo found that the most frequent flight stage during which wire strikes occur is when pilots are making trim passes. It is critical you make additional surveillance orbits when you make your trim passes or any other time you change the direction you're flying a field. The study also found that in 59% of the wire strike accidents discussed, there was some type of distraction involved. These included a temporary focus on another obstacle, a radio call, concern over protecting adjacent crops, or worrying about future work. You must have a mental or verbal system in place to constantly remind yourself about the wires in your field.

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.