

Fly Safe Campaign



MAINTAIN ACCIDENT AWARENESS

Don't become a statistic!

NTSB has reported 16 ag accidents including 2 fatal accidents so far this year. There have been 2 fatal accidents not yet reported by NTSB bringing the total to 4 fatal accidents.

KEEP SAFETY AND ACCURACY IN MIND DURING CORN APPLICATION SEASON

July is here which means the ag aviation industry is now in its busiest month. Among other crops being treated by aerial application in July, fungicide will be applied to tens of millions of acres of corn. The demand for these applications is expected to be incredibly high this year, which puts pressure on operators and pilots to get all the work completed on time. This intense pressure can lead to unsafe behaviors including pushing back maintenance, flying in foggy conditions, flying when it's too windy, taking safety shortcuts, and pushing inexperienced pilots into larger and faster aircraft and fields in which they are not yet ready. It can also lead to poor applications by treating too high above the canopy, causing drift, or too low, causing streaking.

There's a rumor of a pilot who recently received his tailwheel endorsement and will now be flying a large turbine airplane to make corn fungicide applications in the Midwest. If true, the operator could be putting the pilot in an unsafe situation and is unfair to the customers who might receive an inaccurate application. Pilots, recognize that if you're in a similar situation, your safety is not being considered. No matter how busy the operation is, safety must be a top priority. There have also been reports of pilots pulling the breaker or using duct tape to disable stall warning indicators. This kind of behavior is dangerous for ag pilots of any skill level, but particularly for inexperienced pilots or pilots flying an aircraft new to them.

Application accuracy is also critical for corn fungicide applications. A recent field study looking to identify potential causes for the streaking seen in corn fungicide applications from the 2021 season found that flying much too low, with the wheels almost in the canopy, caused a gap with reduced spray deposition in the zone of overlap between two passes. When flown at an appropriate height, no gap in deposition was seen between passes. Finally, an aircraft's swath width does not magically change when you switch from herbicide to fungicide – do not stretch your swath width just to get more work done.

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!