PROFESSIONAL AERIAL APPLICATORS' SUPPORT SYSTEM

FLY SAFE CAMPAIGN

MAINTAIN ACCIDENT AWARENESS
DON'T BECOME A STATISTIC!

AgAviation.org/flysafe

June 16, 2025

11 Ag Accidents reported by NTSB this year
2 Fatalities

LOOK FOR SIGNS OF DUST DEVILS TO AVOID THEM – THEY CAN BE DIFFICULT TO SEE IF NO DEBRIS IS PRESENT

Dust devils are a weather phenomenon that occur under clear skies and warm conditions. They are especially common on flat terrain, occurring in areas with strong surface heating. Dust devils can cause sudden and unexpected turbulence that can quickly cause loss of control of an aircraft caught in one. The NTSB reports that dust devils have been responsible for 170 aviation accidents since 1982. They are common in the southwest region of the U.S. but can occur anywhere under the right conditions. Dust devils typically have a diameter ranging from 10 to 300 ft and an average height between 500 and 1,000 ft; wind speeds can reach 60 mph.

The nature of low altitude ag flying puts you at high risk of encountering a dust devil, so when weather conditions are right for their formation, take extra caution. While dust devils are visible and detectable when there is debris present, they are often invisible when they collect no or minimal visible debris. There can be signs of their presence though – in the right sun angle, dust devils can cast a shadow on the ground. In certain environments dust devils will leave tracks on the ground even if they're not lifting dust or other debris up into the air.

The NTSB has an educational video on the dangers dust devils represent to aviation safety, as well as a safety alert that includes more information, including details about aviation accidents linked to dust devils. One of the accidents involved a G-164B Ag Cat in 2023 that unknowingly flew through a dust devil shortly after takeoff. The aircraft lost lift and impacted a field. In addition to the NTSB resources, FAA has recently updated the Aviation Weather Handbook with new details about dust devils – see section 16.2.6.3.1 which provides a detailed description of how dust devils are formed.

Check TFRs	Always check Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) NOTAMs before flying! Make sure you have proof of a preflight TFR briefing from sources such as FSS or https://www.1800wxbrief.com
Don't Forget to Communicate	Communicate with other ag aircraft using 122.925 MHz – limit your transmissions to announcing who you are, where you are, and what you plan to do.

Make a *Fly Safe* Resolution Today!