



2005-May : Newsletter

SAFETY POSTERS

Need some additional ALEA safety posters? We have plenty. Contact the ALEA Home Office at: (918) 599-0705.

SAFETY OFFICER COURSE

There is still room in the Aviation Safety Management Course that will be held at the ALEA Annual Conference in Reno. This will have plenty for the veteran, the new and those aspiring to be a safety officer. Your initial and continuing education is vital to the success of your Safety Program.

If you need additional information, please contact me at, safety@alea.org.

OH-58 AIRCRAFT AND PARTS NEEDED

Military surplus parts and aircraft are not as plentiful as they once were. The Jefferson County Sheriff's Department is in need of one OH-58, and parts. If you have parts or an airframe you don't need, help a fellow unit. You can contact Chief Deputy Walter Billingsley, 409-835-8734, email: wbillingsley@co.jefferson.tx.us.

If you have something you need, send me an email at: safety@alea.org, and I will place it in the next newsletter. Also, you can post your requests in the "safety discussion area" on the ALEA website.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING BILL

As recently reported by HAI, the U.S. House Appropriations Committee approved a bill that would significantly increase Department of Homeland Security (DHS) funding for the third consecutive year. The bill would provide a 4.7% funding increase over fiscal year 2005, and about 4.4% more funding than President Bush requested for fiscal year 2006. All but \$1 billion of the \$31.9 billion measure would be for discretionary spending.

A number of law enforcement aviation organizations have already taken advantage of funding from the DHS for training, equipment and operations.

SINGLE-PILOT OPERATIONS

The theme for this month is Single-Pilot Operations. I occasionally hear people comment that they don't have the luxury of having two crewmembers. It should not be a luxury to have two crewmembers for tactical operations. It should be a requirement. I realize that some of our members conduct various tactical operations i.e. patrol, surveillance, search and traffic enforcement single-pilot. That does not mean it's a prudent way to operate, even if you have done so without having an accident. We manage risk by having and complying with appropriate standards. Do not wait to fix the problem until after you have an accident.

While the pilot is directing operations on the ground, who is looking for other traffic, navigating, communicating with ATC and other aircraft, conducting a good instrument scan, and making aviation decisions? **NOBODY!**

Flying should not be a part-time responsibility. Following careful examination of law enforcement aviation accidents I have come to the conclusion that a major contributing factor in many of our accidents is the fact that pilots are often distracted from pilot responsibilities as a result of too much attention being focused on the mission. We have tactical flight officers and second pilots so that the pilot flying can dedicate his/her attention to flying the aircraft.

When people ask me what's wrong with single-pilot operations, I ask, "What's the mission?" If it's a tactical mission and they are flying single-pilot, the second question is, "What's more important, safety or the mission?" Too many times people say it's the mission. That sounds like safety has taken a back seat when it should not. Such misplaced priorities are completely contrary to professional aviation safety doctrine.

Since 1998, law enforcement has had 9 single-pilot accidents. I suspect this represents a disproportionately high number of accidents compared to the number of hours flown single-pilot. If you believe the mission should take priority over safety, ask yourself how your husband, wife, children and parents would answer this question. I think we all know the answer.

There are organizations that operate single-pilot IFR in IMC. Since 1999, 30 of 101 law enforcement accidents were due to engine or other mechanical failure. Flying hard IFR single-pilot in single-engine aircraft can get real busy when the engine quits. You better have a place to go, be able to get there or you're in big trouble. And there are issues like turbulence and icing that often come into play during hard IFR flight. There is nothing like a little ice over mountainous terrain and all you can do is descend.

I don't have a problem with single-pilot, single-engine operations in IMC under the right circumstances, such as in and out of familiar airports and short flights along familiar routes. But extended IFR in IMC with a single pilot in your single-engine aircraft deserves careful consideration.

2005 ACCIDENTS

Another accident free month has passed. There has been only one accident this year. Great job!

Got something you want to say or share with our members, send it to: safety@alea.org. Always confidential if that's your wish. I don't have all the answers. Let's hear from you.

That's it for this month. Remember: SAFETY FIRST! Your family, your partner and your organization thank you.

Remember – Safety First!

Keith Johnson

Safety Program Manager