



The

Safety

Wire

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I AM NOT IN LOVE WITH SAFETY POLICIES.

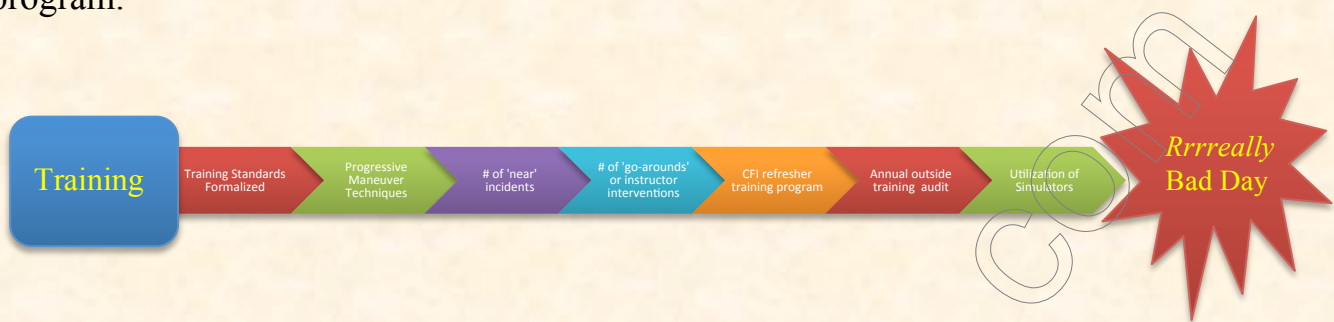
It sometimes surprises people to hear a 'safety guy' like myself say that I am not emotionally attached to safety policies. What I do have an undying love for is safety. Safety is the intended result of safety policy. As long as a policy is delivering good results, I am happy to have it around. When a policy fails to deliver, I am first in line to change, replace or remove it as the

case may be. Too often, we assume a policy is working. Simply anointing a rule or procedure with the 'safety' title usually places it in a position where it is beyond question and the impact on safety is assumed. This is not ideal and perpetuates problems in our industry.

For example, let's look again at the 18 law enforcement aviation accidents in 2013 that I mentioned in the newsletter last month. Of those 18 agencies, I could only find four that had a previous accident. Why is this important? Traditionally, we track the performance of our safety policies through 'lag' data, such as accident history. How many times have we said that our safety program is working well because we've never had an accident? Well, last year more than a dozen law enforcement agencies had their first. We need a different way of determining if our safety policies are providing the intended results or if we've just been lucky.

As we all know, an accident is simply the last link in a 'chain of errors.' Waiting for this last link to show deficiencies in the safety program results in damage, injury and sometimes death. The key is to use a system to identify, track and attack those links leading up to an accident.

Here is an example of a hazard that affects us all: in training, there are always a number of risk factors involved. Each one of the blocks below represents a hypothetical means to identify or mitigate a risk factor (depending on your specific operation). These factors are much more accurate indicators to use when determining the health of your safety program.



To put it another way, unless a policy is specifically addressing a contributing factor in the 'chain of errors,' it is unlikely to do much in the prevention of an accident. Often, these types of policies are in place to protect an agency from liability only. For example, "It's against policy to damage aircraft." Ok, that may be a bit extreme, but you get my point.

This is one of the reasons we have been talking so much about Safety Management Systems (SMS). SMS, when done right, will monitor the effectiveness of your safety policies and procedures beyond simply counting accidents. This is not extremely complicated, however, it is not intuitive and you will need a little help if it is a new concept to you. ALEA has a number of resources online, roundtable discussions and presentations at regional events, and both SMS and Aviation Safety Officer (ASO) courses during the annual conference to help you work through this process.



You can't pull a rabbit out of a hat unless you put it there first
--Bob Hoover



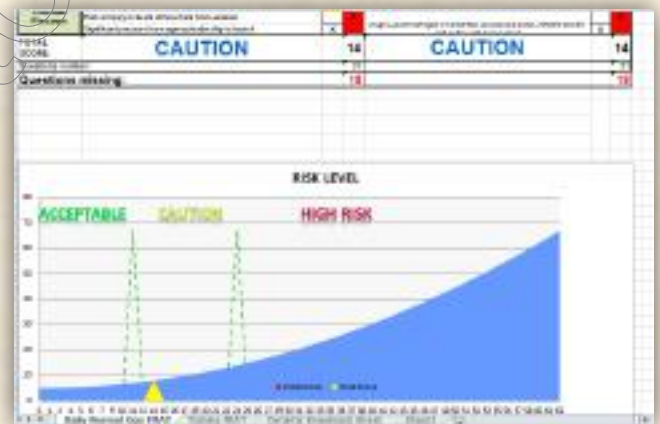
SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION

Go/No-Go or Risk Assessment

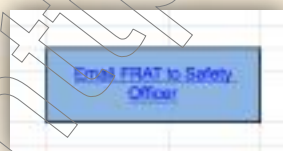
Last month, I introduced a Flight Risk Assessment Tool (FRAT) based on one created by the International Helicopter Safety Team (IHST). Since then, I have worked with a number of ALEA members on the implementation and use of a FRAT in their program. One interesting aspect that has come up in conversations and some recent FRAT articles published by other flying and flight safety publications is the idea that the FRAT is primarily a Go/No-Go decision making tool. While that is one function it can perform, it is important to keep in mind that this is not the primary purpose for using a FRAT.

The FRAT is best used as a way to identify individual risks, see what their collective influence on flight safety is, and most importantly, provide an opportunity to mitigate some of the risks in a specific and meaningful way (as opposed to random 'safety thoughts'). You will find that only rarely will a FRAT give you a 'no-go' score.

Most of the time, the FRAT is there to let you see what the major factors are going to be. From there, the flight crew can think of ways to mitigate those risks, especially the high scoring ones. If the crew cannot think of a way to mitigate risks to a reasonable level, the FRAT calls for contacting a third party. This third party can then look at those same risks and offer some input on how to mitigate them. That's why it is important for this contact person to be an experienced aircrew member. Once things have been made as safe as possible, you can still go fly, just with a heightened awareness. If you get into the 'red' range of the FRAT and cannot mitigate down to the yellow, then the FRAT assumes the 'no-go' function.



Treating a FRAT simply as a go/no-go tool misses out on the real benefits offered by the tool. Such labeling also leaves a bad taste in the mouths of many aviators, especially those in public safety who are extremely mission orientated. I look forward to your questions or comments on the FRAT.



Tip: To change the email address in the "Email FRAT to Safety Officer" block - right click on it and select 'Edit Hyperlink'.

ALEA Flight Risk Assessment Tool (FRAT) download: <http://www.alea.org/assets/cms/files/safety/ALEA%20FRAT.xls>

If you look for truth, you may find comfort in the end: if you look for comfort you will not get either comfort or truth.

~C.S. Lewis

SAFETY RESOURCES

NEW IHST Safety Bulletins

SMS for CFIs: http://www.ihst.org/portals/54/newsletters/Training_QR5_SMS_Instruct.pdf

Small Operator SMS Start Up: http://www.ihst.org/portals/54/newsletters/Training_QR5_SMS.pdf

Hazard Identification: <http://www.ihst.org/portals/54/newsletters/Training.pdf>

Complete Listing of Bulletins: <http://www.ihst.org/Default.aspx?tabid=3089&language=en-US>

Journal of Aviation Technology and Engineering

<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/jate/>

Latest NASA newsletter: *What Would You Have Done?*

http://asrs.arc.nasa.gov/publications/callback/cb_409.html



Let the refining and improving of your own life keep you so busy that you have little time to criticize others."

~H. Jackson Brown,

REALITY CHECK...

This month, I think it is critical that we all take time to look at recent information on three fatal law enforcement accidents:

Police Scotland:

http://www.aaib.gov.uk/cms_resources.cfm?file=/AAIB%20S2-2014%20G-SPAO.pdf

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/transport/clutha-helicopter-s-engine-starved-of-fuel-1-3306655>

Atlanta Police Department:

http://www.nts.gov/aviationquery/brief2.aspx?ev_id=20121104X05051&ntsbno=ERA13GA046&akey=1

<http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/hitlist.cfm?docketID=54750&CurrentPage=1&EndRow=15&StartRow=1&order=1&sort=0&TXTSEARCHT=>

Alaska Department of Public Safety:

<http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/document.cfm?docID=408766&docketID=55245&mkey=86550>

<http://www.adn.com/2014/02/03/3305296/ntsb-releases-documents-on-alaska.html>

As always...

If you would like to be a part of this process, please contact me.

If you have a story to tell or a lesson to pass on, send it to me.

If you like what you see happening with the program, I would like to hear from you.

If you want to see something different, or additional... I NEED to hear from you!

Until the next flight,

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