



The

Safety

Wire

March 2023

The shortage of pilots and mechanics is starting to affect all areas of aviation. The effect it has on our operations can cause us to work longer hours and cut out some procedures that would have been no problem if we were fully staffed. The risk increases along with personnel shortages.

According to the FAA, risk is the degree of uncertainty. Risk is the future impact of a hazard that is not controlled or eliminated. What does this mean to us? Risk is a combination of factors that can affect the safe and successful outcome of a flight. It can be as obvious as weather conditions or as subtle as stress and fatigue. Understanding risk is the first step to recognizing the potential hazards. Therefore, identifying the hazards is important prior to any flight.



Identifying the visible risks is something we normally do during preflight inspection and flight planning. We examine the aircraft for any mechanical abnormality. A thorough preflight is a mandatory step in our flight operation. Any number of potential issues can be addressed during this

examination. Another important step is the preflight planning. This involves checking weather and notices that can affect the routine nature of the flight. Recognizing weather hazards and making appropriate Go / No Go decisions could have prevented many if not all the accidents where inadvertent IMC was encountered during the flight.

In these cases, the pilot was not prepared to handle the lack of visibility and visual cues required to maintain control of the aircraft. Inadvertent IMC should of course be avoided whenever possible, but the procedures to continue operation in IMC conditions should be taught as a necessary response to the situation with the same importance as any emergency procedure. Based on the type of operation, the IIMC procedure may be landing ASAP or filing IFR to continue the flight. So, the initial decision should be to avoid the risk.

This decision making can be emphasized in training. The steps required to handle the hazards when encountered are necessary to practice in training. Frequent practice of the procedures to handle operational risks is the only way to be confident in executing the necessary maneuvers. The same is true regarding autorotation and emergency procedures associated with any component failure. The decisions we make are influenced by others on our team and the mission priorities. This all comes back to the fact that pilot and maintenance shortages can increase our stress and increase risk.

Fatigue plays a factor in our daily operations when we are short staffed. Fatigue is affected by length of flight and duty time, light exposure, and stresses outside of work. It can reduce a pilot's ability to work, reduce efficiency of the mission, and is usually accompanied by feelings of stress, weariness, and tiredness. Less obvious risks can be more personal and harder to identify or to admit.

These are the human factors associated with daily activities, health, and welfare. Fatigue is the easiest to recognize. How often do we try to complete a task even though we are tired? Studies have shown that fatigue is attributed to poor judgment



and accidents in all sectors of equipment operation. Everything from driving cars to operating machinery has a long list of fatigue accidents. Fatigue can be admitted more easily than stress and distracting circumstances.

All of us have factors in our lives that can cause distraction or a loss of situational awareness. When we recognize these factors as potential hazards, we have the ability

to reduce and even avoid the risk. The importance in truthfully admitting the potential risks is often difficult in a high stress mission or environment. It is worse when we are short staffed. Understanding risk, fatigue and the triggers that decrease safety are crucial to our success in reaching the ultimate goal - to go home after our shift.

ONLINE MEETINGS

APSA conducts regularly scheduled online meetings for safety officers, maintenance technicians, SAR and Natural Resources personnel, and UAS operators via a conference call you can join using your computer, mobile device or phone. Online meetings are open to any APSA member. Contract maintenance providers to APSA members are welcome to participate in the maintenance meeting as well. If you would like to join, send an email to: tpalmer@publicsafetyaviation.org

The schedule for upcoming APSA online meetings is as follows.



Maintenance:

Wednesday, April 5, 2023
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM EDT (1700 UTC)

SAR:

Wednesday, April 19, 2023
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM EDT (1700 UTC)

UAS:

Wednesday, May 3, 2023
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM EDT (1700 UTC)

Safety

Friday, May 26, 2023
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM EDT (1700 UTC)

Natural Resources:

Wednesday, June 28, 2023
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM EDT (1700 UTC)

"Leadership is an action, not a position."

~ Donald McGannon

EMERGENCY PROCEDURE OF THE MONTH

In each monthly emergency situation, discuss what you would do, as a crew, to respond to the following emergency. If the EP does not apply to your specific aircraft, think of something similar.

Loss of Transmission oil pressure

EOW: 3/26/2023



Honoring the Fallen



Sgt. David Poirrier



Cpl. Scotty Canezaro