

# ALASKAN AVIATION SAFETY FOUNDATION

April 2017

Ellis Airlines dock,  
1950s. Photo  
courtesy Ketchikan  
Museums.



## ***Get ready for Summer Flying Season the right way***

By Harry Kieling, Chairman

It is that time of year again when we emerge from breakup; start enjoying longer days and start dreaming of summer flying. The inaugural aviation event in Anchorage is the upcoming Annual Seaplane Safety Seminar. Hopefully many of you will make the event and all of you will start thinking about safe flying.

Before that first flight have you evaluated your currency and proficiency? Did you fly a lot over the winter or not at all? Did your plane sit in a nice warm hangar or was it outside during those long cold months?

There are some positive steps you take to counteract some of the negative answers to the above. Proficiency can be more quickly recovered by scheduling a ride with a CFI (and it doesn't have to be a "BFR"). As to your airplane, what better way to ensure it is ready for the summer than scheduling your annual inspection before the heavy flying season? One idea to try is to have your annual done with the aircraft on floats. This gives your mechanic the opportunity to take a good hard look at your rigging and the floats themselves.

And when you fly out to your cabin or favorite fishing hole after the ice goes out, give the landing area an extra hard look. A lot of things could happen over the winter including debris in the water or a change in shoreline where you are used to tying up.

It is also a good time to check your survival gear. Medicines and food should be within shelf life. Is everything there you need or want? Any new gear that would make it even safer? Is it time to invest in a PLB or Sat Phone? What about a 406 beacon? Spider Tracks/DeLorme/Spot?? Just remember that while hopefully none of these devices will ever be needed, they will sure make rescue easier if you have them.

There is a lot to think about before summer flying. Don't be in a hurry. Don't take chances. Enjoy a safe and fun time doing what we all enjoy doing

Fly Safe!  
Harry

# Don't succumb to the allure of "Get-home-itis"

by John Mahany

Get-home-itis is a combination of things. It's typically an emotional, irrational decision to 'press-on' and get 'home' (or get somewhere), when you should instead turn around (the dreaded 180) and land or delay or cancel a flight. What causes some pilots to do this? There is some thing or things that pressures a pilot to continue when it is the wrong thing to do. As a result, a pilot's situational awareness becomes impaired. This prevents him or her from realizing that the actual outcome, (running out of fuel short of the destination for example), that is rapidly approaching is not the same as the *desired outcome* of safely returning home.

The French [Bureau d'Enquêtes et d'Analyses pour la Sécurité de l'Aviation Civile \(BEA\)](#) did a study on this between 1991 and 1996, aptly titled, "The Get-home-itis Syndrome". During this five-year period, sixty accidents that met certain criteria were studied. Of the sixty, forty (2/3) were fatal. The accidents fell into three categories: insufficient fuel, unfavorable weather, and nightfall. Ten of the accidents were caused by fuel starvation, including four during the approach phase. The rest of the accidents were related to weather conditions and the infamous 'Loss of Control' that we hear so much about now. Also included were six cases of in-flight break-up.

What is behind all this? It could be a family obligation, work or friends or colleagues. They don't understand the limitations of weather or an aircraft's capability. They rely on the pilot, and subtly pressure the pilot to keep going. Some passengers are not aware of the pilot's specific limitations and the go-no/go decision-making process. Think about it—how many private pilots explain their personal minimums regarding the weather and their aircraft, to their passengers before a flight?

As a result, passengers may wrongly influence a pilot to make a bad decision and press-on, when in fact the hapless pilot should not go anywhere, or should divert and land. But, the pilot does not want to let everyone else down and depending on the relationship of the pilot to the passengers, he or she may not have the

nerve to stand up to them, and say a flight is delayed or postponed. And if a pilot does this, the passengers may not respect the decision and press harder. The truth is, we all have our limitations and should feel comfortable within them. But when it challenged, it can be a very difficult situation to deal with. Ideally, this all really needs to be addressed in advance, when it's not an issue, in order to avoid a tough situation.

For some pilots, get-home-itis can also be coupled with a sense of invulnerability (of "it won't happen to me"). A pilot will convince him or herself that it is possible to "get there" and keep on going. Maybe he or she has been able to make it several times before, under similar conditions, safely. This results in what has been called "expectation bias". Rational thinking and careful analysis of the facts are disregarded in favor of getting somewhere.

How often have individuals under these circumstances foolishly not checked weather, rushed a preflight, or not refueled before departing? Instead, they just depart, or they continue, into worsening weather, stronger than forecast headwinds, or overflying a possible fuel stop. And, then, all too quickly, they are in a bind. Their lack of planning has resulted in a dangerous predicament.

Remember—having limited options is never a good thing and the choices you are left with usually are not good at all. The odds end up stacked against you and we don't typically think clearly nor exercise good judgment in situations like this.

In the final analysis, all too often Get-home-itis results in a pilot not getting home safely at all and that's something all of us should do what we can to avoid.

Fly safely,

John

*John Mahany is an ATP/CE-500, MCFI, in southern California. He has experience with airline and charter flying, and spent 4 ½ years flying in Alaska. He flies a CE 180 for fun.*

# 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Seaplane Safety Seminar

Photo Credit – NIOSH\*

**Saturday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2017**

**Registration begins at 0800, Safety Seminar from 0830–1600**

**at the UAA Aviation Technology Center  
on Merrill Field, Anchorage, Alaska**

**Keynote Speaker: Steven McCaughey  
Executive Director, Seaplane Pilots Association**

Presentations on:

- Practical Aerodynamics
- River Operations
- FAA Medical Updates
- Observations on Mechanical Issues
- ADS-B Mandate and Solutions
- Expert Panel - Flight Plans and Survival Technologies



Lunch available by Alpha Eta Rho



**Seaplane  
Pilots  
Association**

For more information:

Phone: 907-243-7237 or email: [aasfonline@gmail.com](mailto:aasfonline@gmail.com)

## ***2016 Fall Safety Seminar presentations available to view online***

In November last year, the Alaskan Aviation Safety Foundation partnered with the National Transportation Safety Board to bring you our fall safety seminar. The seminar had a focus on loss of control accidents, which is the leading cause of general aviation accidents. We were fortunate to have the Honorable NTSB Member Earl Weener and his staff come to Anchorage and, along with the Alaska NTSB staff, they helped us to put on a fantastic seminar. In case you missed it, or if you'd like a refresher, select presentations from the seminar are available at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVWfXEvdjkd8-PN31QZBD3g>, and additional information and presentation slides are found here: [http://www.nts.gov/news/events/Pages/2016\\_alaskaloc\\_SS.aspx](http://www.nts.gov/news/events/Pages/2016_alaskaloc_SS.aspx)

We hope you enjoy these seminars and find the information interesting and helpful. Don't miss our spring seaplane safety seminar to be held April 22<sup>nd</sup>. If you have any suggestions or ideas for seminar topics, or if you'd like to help with the seminars, please contact us at 907-243-7237.



**2017  
PT6A Customer Day  
Anchorage, AK**



If you are an owner, operator or maintenance provider of an aircraft that operates a PT6A engine, you are here by cordially invited to attend the 2017 P&W customer day conference.

In the spirit of continuously improving our global support to PT6A engine operators, Pratt & Whitney Canada is pleased to invite you to the PT6A Customer Day Conference that will be held on Friday May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at the Alaska Aviation Heritage Museum (4721 Aircraft Drive, Anchorage, AK, 99502).

The agenda includes technical updates, commercial offerings and some time will be used for Q&A. This will be an opportunity to meet with your fellow PT6A customers and P&WC representatives. Furthermore, this event is free for P&WC customers with lunch and coffee breaks provided.

If you are interested in participating, please go to [www.faasafety.gov](http://www.faasafety.gov) to register. We have limited space in the conference room, so we invite you to reserve your seat at the earliest.

# The GA and Part 135 Activity Survey is Cleared for Takeoff!

Did you receive an email, postcard, or mailed invitation asking you to complete the survey for your aircraft? The survey takes only 10–15 minutes and helps the FAA improve general aviation infrastructure and safety.

Please complete the survey today online at [www.aviationsurvey.org](http://www.aviationsurvey.org) or contact us:

Toll Free: 1-800-826-1797

Email: [infoaviationsurvey@tetrattech.com](mailto:infoaviationsurvey@tetrattech.com)

To protect confidentiality this FAA sponsored survey is conducted by Tetra Tech, an independent research firm. For survey results from previous years, visit [http://www.faa.gov/data\\_research/aviation\\_data\\_statistics/general\\_aviation](http://www.faa.gov/data_research/aviation_data_statistics/general_aviation)

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