ALASKAN AVIATION SAFETY FOUNDATION

Newsletter

Winter 2013

The foundation has only one mission:

TO PROMOTE AVIATION SAFETY THROUGH PUBLIC EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Chairman's Corner

The Number was 16.

Sixteen was the number that the FAA set as a not to exceed number of Fatal and Serious Injury (FSI) accidents for 2013. Well that number and that goal was busted. 2013 was the worse year for fatal accidents in ten years. And that is not the whole story. While statistically the number of FSI accidents is a metric which you can quantify and reduce, the number of fatalities (over 30) is even more tragic. While it is true any given accident could have one or nine people on board and accident prevention would focus on not having that accident regardless of how many people were on board. And it is true the accident could occur going out to pick up people as easily as returning with a full aircraft, the human impact is still greater when you have accidents with multiple occupants. And the story this summer was a lot of multiple occupants needlessly died.

Why do I say needlessly? Because while the final reports are not in, it was obvious to me that we did not discover any new ways to have an accident we just changed the names and faces. We all know how to prevent these accidents, Why is it we don't? Let's look at a few **what if** scenarios.

What if you take off over gross weight and/or out of CG? First of all you become a test pilot. And some day you will be a very unsuccessful test pilot. That same day you will likely become an accident statistic. And if you take off over gross and you stall the aircraft on takeoff, chances are you and your passengers will become a FSI statistic.

What if you fly your aircraft out of the controllable flight envelope (like a tight turn and stall trying to keep that moose in sight)? You will likely become a FSI statistic. It is true you can recover from stalls and even spins if you know what to do immediately and you have enough altitude to do it. But how many of you have had formal emergency maneuver training? And my guess is that you are already flying well below an altitude which would allow you to recover even if you did everything right. So you become a FSI statistic.

What if you take off, have an emergency or power failure right after liftoff, are you prepared to fly straight ahead to impact or will you try and bend it around and return to the runway you took off from? If you are at 300, 400, or maybe even 700 when you begin the maneuver you will probably stall and likely become a FSI statistic.

What if you have an accident for unknown reasons and the aircraft and pilot are never found? What if you still had the accident but you had a device on board that would have helped locate the wreckage. Maybe not prevent the accident or fatality but eliminate the need for a Search (of Search and Rescue) that involved 197 people, 57 aircraft, and 84 flights (actual numbers from a search this summer). There are a lot of these devices available from the 406 beacon to Spider Tracks, SPOT, and most recently DeLorme InReach. A couple of these devices cost only a couple hundred dollars and require a very inexpensive tracking service. Some are tied into the FAA's Enhanced Surveillance Reporting Service (ESRS). Bottom line, if the aircraft goes down and you have one of these devices on and operating, the search can be narrowed to within 2 minutes flight time of where you went down. There is no guarantee it will save your live (although it may) but it will certainly cut down on the length of time your loved ones grieve over the uncertainty of your fate.

Finally, why not join the Alaskan Aviation Safety Foundation on November 23d for our fall safety seminar. We are going to try a little bit different format and set up **what if** scenarios and see how you would react. Don't worry the devices which will enable audience participation are entirely confidential. We will also have some guest speakers who will share their experiences and what they did right and which may have prevented another FSI accident.

Harry

Coming Event

November 23—Alaska Aviation Safety Foundation fall safety seminar.

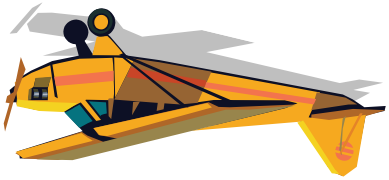
0800-1600 at the UAA Merrill Field Aviation facility

"Focus on Safety—Preventing Accidents "

after a rough summer for Alaska Flyers.

(Bring your ideas to help reverse the trend)

THIS **NOT** **THIS**



HOW ARE YOUR PROCEDURES?

Fall is here, with winter rapidly approaching. It's time to review winter flying and cold weather operating procedures. Go through your survival gear, replacing summer gear with cold weather gear as necessary to make sure it is suitable for winter. Dress properly to survive the cold, and allow more time for everything, especially the preflight. This is a key item, as frozen pilots tend to overlook things in their hurry to get in the airplane, get it started and get going. Be sure to thoroughly and carefully remove snow and ice from the airplane.

There is nothing worse than being frozen after finishing the preflight and then rushing to get in the airplane, getting out of the cold, and then not being able to get it started, for example. Hopefully it was preheated and is ready to start. There are accident reports filled with stories of pilots rushing to takeoff in a still frozen airplane with frozen gyros or other systems not yet warmed up and working properly and then crashing a short distance later. Don't let this happen to you. Give the airplane and its' systems adequate time to warm up before taking off, though this is admittedly not always easy when the mercury is well below zero. Try to be prepared and anticipate accordingly.

Also take note of ramp, taxiway and runway conditions. At smaller airports, there may not be any NOTAM's for surface conditions or breaking action reports. Taxiing or maneuvering on the ice and snow covered tarmac with possibly frozen brakes may prove challenging.

On a different topic I recently attended a one day Safety Stand Down here in Southern California, hosted by the Southern California Aviation Association. Among the speakers was the Honorable Robert L. Sumwalt, Vice Chair, NTSB, who gave the keynote address. His topic was 'Normalization of Deviance." In other words, deviating from a procedure can become 'normal' if done on a regular basis. This is not a good thing. Mr. Sumwalt had statistics to back this up. Did you know, for example, that in airline operations there were 37 crew- caused air carrier accidents, from 1978 – 1990?

This led to a discussion of what are called 'standard operating procedures', or SOP's, for the airlines. Each airline has its' own 'SOP's' that spell out how its' pilots will operate the aircraft, in detail. Every facet of the operation is addressed. What Mr. Sumwalt related is that in spite of this, some organizations (airlines or corporate) still lack SOP's, some do not adhere to SOP's, or some flight crews intentionally disregard SOP's.

This is a philosophy that flows from the top down, from management down to the pilots flying the line. The Flight Safety Foundation (FSF) in a study found that non-compliance with SOP's was a factor in 40% of accidents world-wide. Intentional non-compliance has also led to other problems. Crews who were not in compliance with SOP's averaged three times more errors per flight, and mismanaged more errors. As a result, they also found themselves in more undesired aircraft situations.

A key to addressing this is for management to realize that well designed SOP's are essential for safety. There needs to be a strong commitment from management to follow SOP's. The management needs to set the example on this, and not just pay lip-service to it. Part of this may stem from something as basic as going through all of an operator's manuals and making sure that all the procedures are up-to-date. Are there outdated procedures, or are there procedures that are not being followed for some particular reason? If possible, change the procedures that are not being followed. Establish a culture of procedural compliance. Procedures must not be developed in a vacuum. They must have the input of those who are expected to follow them. Make sure your procedures reflect the way you intend to operate, and then operate that way.

To summarize his remarks, the normalization of deviance is when one is not following SOP's but is taking short cuts, and then this becomes an accepted procedure. Avoid selective compliance, which is to say, when something is perceived to be a 'stupid rule', and as a result pilots may not feel obligated to follow it. Then check for compliance, by periodically auditing flight crews.

Fly safely,

I DON'T LIKE THIS

Have you ever found yourself flying and saying—"I don't like this"? If you made it through the event, did you do a review of factors contributing to your uneasy feelings?

Many times our predicaments are of our own making. A review of our flights (self critiques) could provide a clue to errors—leading to safer future flights. It wouldn't be wrong to self critique every flight after we land. What went right, what went wrong. Critiquing a flight with problems is even more important. What sort of issues might be ripe for review.

Where was I when the flock of birds appeared? 50 feet, 500 feet, 3000 feet? If I had hit one or more, what would/could have been the consequence. Would it have been better to have been at a different altitude?

Where was I when the engine started running rough? Similar to the bird question. If it stopped, how much time was available for recognition, reaction, and restart or emergency landing. Where would it have been better to have been?

Where did this cloud/fog/turbulence come from? Did I use resources available to foresee this weather?

Where am I? Did I plan and use available navigation resources to keep ahead of the plane and know where I was.

Many of our military flyers debrief and review every flight—to make flying safer and more productive.

More on the 2012 GA Survey

We need your help! The General Aviation and Part 135 Activity Survey (GA Survey) for reporting on calendar year 2012 will be ending soon. Because of the unique characteristics of the Alaskan region, all owners/operators of Alaska-based aircraft (as of December 31, 2012) are asked to participate. If you have already completed this year's survey, thank you!

In addition to assessing the impact of safety initiatives, the FAA and other federal agencies use the GA Survey to understand how general aviation may be affected by other policy decisions. For example, the US EPA has used data from the GA Survey to examine how changes in fuel regulations, such as eliminating AvGas 100LL, may affect owners/operators and the services they provide. Accurate data from the 2012 GA Survey on the size and activity of the general aviation fleet in Alaska will continue to be an important source of information guiding such policies.

You can complete the survey on-line, or a survey form will be mailed to you along with a postage-paid envelope.

Why is your participation important?

- *We need your help so that we can accurately represent aviation activity in Alaska.* Data from this survey are used to estimate the number of active aircraft in Alaska and to understand the safe operation of aircraft.

We need to hear from everyone! Please respond, even if you did not fly your aircraft during 2012, you sold it, or the aircraft was damaged.

Your responses are confidential. Tetra Tech is an independent research firm that conducts the GA Survey on behalf of the FAA. The information will be used only for statistical purposes and will not be published or released in any form that would reveal an individual participant.

A short version of the survey form is available for owners of multiple aircraft. We know your time is valuable. If you own three or more aircraft and receive several surveys, please contact us.

Questions? Own three or more aircraft? Please contact Tetra Tech toll-free at 1-800-826-1797 or email infoaviationsurvey@tetratech.com. Thank you!