



## **Return to Flight Safety Guidance - Pilots**

### **Threat: Pilots Returning to Flight with Little Recency of Experience due to Limited Flying**

- Many pilots will be returning to flying after extended periods away which may lead to reduced levels of proficiency.
- In addition to recency concerns, many pilots may potentially encounter distractions due to financial and health concerns associated with the pandemic and economic downturn.

### **Mitigation: Review Changes, Mental Rehearsal (Chair Fly) and Threat-Forward Briefings**

Studies have shown that areas such as memory recall, situational assessments, procedural knowledge, and muscle-memory response, as well as decision making, are all impacted by reduced proficiency. Consider these mitigations:

- **Be prepared** - Review pertinent manuals and NOTAMS *before* you show up to fly, with special emphasis on procedures, airspeeds, and checklists. Additionally, review recent manual revision highlights and changes.
- **PIC selection** – When flying with another pilot, discuss recency of experience *before* departure when selecting who will be the PIC. There should be no shame in this conversation - Safety is most important.
- **Pilot Monitoring (PM)** – Pilots are always pilots, so if you are flying with another pilot, they should take an active role as the “Pilot Monitoring”. They are the most important layer in the Threat and Error Management. Data indicates that in an operation with a pilot monitoring, 72% of errors are trapped by the PM. Crosscheck all avionics inputs. Trust, but verify and set the expectation that your fellow pilots do the same for you.
- **Automation** - Use the appropriate level for each phase of flight to your advantage. Integrate more manual flying as additional confidence and proficiency returns. Practice approaches as appropriate.
- **Accomplish checklists with strict discipline and follow procedures** while flying.
- **Do not rush** - Especially for ATC. Say “Unable” if assigned unrealistic restrictions or instructions, like “expedite” or “without delay”. Early gear and final flap configurations will ensure a stable approach.
- **Be patient** – As air traffic increases, other pilots and ATC may also be performing their duties slower than normal to prevent errors. Please be patient.
- **Use your resources** – Review the operating handbooks for your aircraft and avionics. Review normal and emergency procedures. External resources available to you include FSS, ATC, AOPA Pilot Services, local CFIs, your fellow pilots.



## **Return to Flight Safety Guidance - Aircraft**

### **Threat: Aircraft Returning from Storage & Inactivity**

- Increased issues associated with blockages in aircraft inlets, pitot-static blockages and engine inlet/exhaust covers
- Increased issues associated with insects, birds and rodent damage
- Potential for unexpected and unusual system malfunctions as aircraft return to service, as well as increased rates of rejected takeoffs

### **Mitigation: Enhanced Preflight Walk Around & Interior Inspection**

Additional vigilance is needed during the interior and exterior pre-flight inspections. Please consider these additional critical items that demand a higher level of scrutiny:

- Verify correct documents aboard aircraft and that required inspections (100-hour, annual, static system, ELT, AD compliance) have been completed
- Gear pins, Engine covers, Taped plastic covering removed
- Pitot tubes and pitot static ports clear
- Temperature probes and AOA vanes free and clear of any debris
- Cabin air inlets, outflow valve outlets clear
- Tires in satisfactory condition and free from obvious irregularities
- Access panels and doors not in use are closed and latched
- Fuel tank vents unobstructed
- Electrical and equipment doors properly closed and secure
- Inspect the ground for any leaks of fuel, oil, hydraulic fluid, water, lavatory
- Evidence of insects or birds nesting in/on aircraft
- Inside the aircraft, check for water leaks
- Thorough cockpit setup—ensure correct position of each switch and circuit breaker
- Navigation database expiration date
- Ensure objects in the cabin are properly secured
- Consider and prepare for increased possibility of a rejected takeoff

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