



HELICOPTER FACTS

Contact: Tony Molinaro
tony.molinaro@faa.gov or (847) 294-7427

Five Hazardous Attitudes for Helicopter Pilots to Recognize

Many helicopter accidents involve pilots who allow themselves to be influenced by one or more of five basic hazardous attitudes. These attitudes get pilots into trouble by causing them to take chances that invite accidents. As a pilot, the less often you allow yourself to act upon a hazardous attitude, the safer your flying will become.

It should be remembered that every pilot probably has had or will have hazardous thoughts to some degree at some time. Problems arise when these types of thoughts occur regularly and in the extreme. If pilots learn to recognize them for what they are, they can deal with them accordingly and operate safely.

The Five Hazardous Attitudes:

The Anti-Authority Attitude: This attitude is found in people who do not like anyone giving them orders or advice. They think primarily, "No one can tell me what to do," and may either be resentful of having someone tell him or her what to do or may just regard rules, regulations, and procedures as silly or unnecessary. However, it is always your prerogative to question authority if you feel it is in error.

The Impulsive Attitude: This is the attitude of people who focus on "Do something--quickly!" They frequently feel the need to do something – anything - immediately. They do not stop to think about what they are about to do; they do not select the best alternative. They do the first thing that comes to mind.

The Invulnerable Attitude: Many people feel that accidents happen to others, but never to them. They know accidents can happen, and they know that anyone can be affected, but they never really feel or believe that they will be involved. Pilots who think this way are more likely to take chances and run unwise risks, thinking all the time, "It won't happen to me!"

The Macho Attitude: People who are always trying to prove that they are better than anyone else think, "I can do it!" They "prove" themselves by taking risks and by trying to impress others. While this pattern is thought to be a male characteristic, women are equally susceptible.

The Resignation Attitude: People who think, "What's the use?" do not see themselves as making a great deal of difference in what happens to them. When things go well, they think, "That's good luck." When things go badly, they attribute it to bad luck or feel that someone is "out to get them." They leave the action to others--for better or worse. Sometimes, such individuals will even go along with unreasonable requests just to be a "nice person."

To counteract these hazardous attitudes, pilots should memorize the "antidotes" when these unsafe practices creep into their thinking. (See IHST Fact Sheet on "Five Antidotes.")

The International Helicopter Safety Team (IHST) promotes safety and works to reduce accidents. The organization was formed in 2005 to lead a government and industry cooperative effort to address factors that were affecting an unacceptable helicopter accident rate. The group's mission is to reduce the international civil helicopter accident rate by 80 percent by 2016.

More information about the IHST, its reports, its safety tools, and presentations from its 2011 safety symposium can be obtained at its web site at www.IHST.org and its Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/International-Helicopter-Safety-Team-IHST/150529738351608>