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Bad Habits, Airline Delays, & Drones in the Sky

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Quote of the month

"Habits are safer than rules; you don't have to watch them. And you don't have to keep them either. They keep you."

- Frank Crane

Hit reply and send me your favorite quote.

Did You Know?

The phrase "Any traffic in the area, please advise" is specifically prohibited by the AIM.

Thank you for taking the time to read this safety message.

Sorry it has been more than a month since my last message, I've been working on some continuing education which has kept me fairly busy.

Please keep in touch through my website: www.cfidarren.com

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Thanks for your continued support,
Darren

Bad Habits

When I consider the topic of bad habits, more than a few of my own bad habits as a pilot come to my mind. I think about some of the shortcuts I take as a matter of routine. Things that I know to be less than optimal help me shave moments from my pre-departure ballet have become so habitual, I wonder how I can break the cycle.

Such decisions and actions made upon routine assumptions or quick judgements are deposits into the incident bank. Once the bank is full, the result would be an incident or accident. Having exposed some of my bad habits through my writing is somewhat cathartic and has fixed a good many of my bad habits. A few still remain. And eventually the curtains will be open and center stage where all can see will be the few number of bad habits that have never left me.

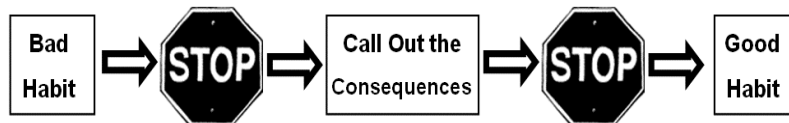
Human Factors experts let us off the hook by telling us that "Habits are acquired behavior patterns repeated sufficiently that they almost occur involuntarily." (Human factors in the training of pilots, Jefferson M. Koonce) We can pick up these bad habits from other students, from our flight instructors, from senior pilots we respect.

Complacency can also assist us in developing bad habits, especially as you become more comfortable with the aircraft you fly. It can start with checklist shortcuts all the way to "Hey watch this." Sometimes we have an unwritten contract with ourselves that a bad habit is "part of the game" -- at least until a close call scares the hell out of us. I remember a cross country flight where my bad habit of setting (and forgetting about) the friction lock on the helicopter collective nearly led me to a full down autorotation when the friction lock came undone. I learned a

valuable lesson at the bottom of the autorotation when I still had power that I wasn't really dealing with an engine failure. After that, I keep my hand near the collective like I was taught and never over-rely on friction locks to keep the helicopter at an altitude/blade pitch.

Ever hear, "Old habits are hard to break?" Ever hear the phrase, "You can't teach old dogs new tricks." New research into neuroplasticity are teaching us that those phrases are simple incorrect. Biophysicists are teaching us that the brain can adjust and create new neural connections in response to new situations and changes in circumstances. While the roots of this concept go back to the late 1800s, its not until the last 10 years that the scientific community has decided that its easy to break old habits and develop new ones to replace them. Its all about breaking the cycle and making new, stronger connections. Its about excercising the brain to make it stronger in new areas of experience. And for those worried about Alzheimer's disease, these findings also suggest you can delay the onset of that disease by as much as a decade.

Well, I'll never have a perfect flight, but I can use a proven technique to prevent me from taking shortcuts and decreasing the margin of safety for my flights. I can use the brain's ability to rearrange itself to form new neural connections and unlearn bad habits. Here's the technique in a nutshell: recognize the bad habit, say "STOP", call out the consequences, say "STOP", and better alternatives.



In the psychology field, I often told folks that addictions are never really cured, just replaced with other addictions. The same thing applies here. Change your old habit for a new stronger habit, in this case, you're looking for a good habit. The good habit can become stronger with practice. Some say it takes 21 instances to create the new neural connections which make your new habit a permanent one. The key is to build on small successes. Never try to eat an elephant in one bite.

Remember it takes practice. As you become better, you can shorten the process above to "Bad - STOP - Good".



Eventually your bad habit will be a thing of the past.

Pilot's Radio Communications Guide

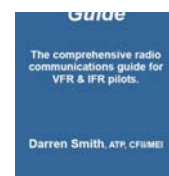
This 70-page review guide is designed as a quick reference guide or radio communications training self study guide. This covers VFR & IFR radio communications. Build your confidence by knowing what to say and when. Designed to fit in your flight bag, size: 3.6" x 8.5" Price: \$14.95 (Free Shipping to US addresses). ISBN: 978-0-9823940-7-6



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Witnesses saw helicopter break up in midair

06/14/2010 Associated Press The National Transportation Safety Board says the crash of an air medical helicopter near Dallas occurred after its tail and rotor systems separated from the fuselage in midair. The preliminary NTSB report cites witnesses who reported seeing the components separate from the CareFlite helicopter while it was cruising at 600 feet. The Bell 222U crashed in a field in Midlothian during a maintenance run June 2. Both the pilot and mechanic on board were killed.

The three-paragraph report says the rotor system hit the ground 200 feet from the main wreckage, while the tail landed 400 feet away. The report was posted on the NTSB website Friday. A CareFlite spokeswoman declined to comment.

<http://www.dallasnews.com/>

The Ultimate Checklist: Pilot's Rules of Thumb

The ultimate checklist that every pilot needs. Ten years in development, this is a product that pilots of all levels of experience can immediately use. This tool covers 30 normal and non-normal situations and has 9 special tools that you'll use on every flight. This high-quality plastic ruler/checklist measures approximately 3.75" x 9". Click the picture to see a larger picture of this tool or click the link for [more information](#). Price: \$3.99 (Free Shipping to US addresses).

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Pilots sneak on runway for late-night car thrill

Two pilots used their airside security passes to sneak onto Queenstown (New Zealand) Airport runway in the middle of the night to race a car. The men were seen by contractors, working overnight on the runway, and were also recorded by security cameras as they drove the car down the main strip.

The pilots put the lives of passengers and maintenance

contractors at risk, said the airport corporation's chief executive, Steve Sanderson. They were banned from all airport land for two years.

The scenic flight pilots drove a car across the airport apron and down the main runway on Sunday, May 9, about midnight.

"They put people's lives at risk and abused their access privileges," Mr Sanderson said. They had used their airside access passes, "given with position, trust and status". Queenstown police investigated, but criminal charges were not pursued.

<http://www.nzherald.co.nz>

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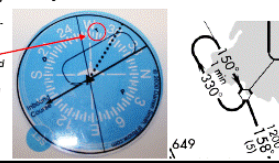
ISBN:978-0-9823940-6-9

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Examples:

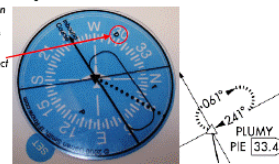
Tear-drop Entry—Heading is 270° direct to the

VOR to enter the hold. Point the arrow at 150° and Visi-Hold shows a tear-drop entry and a recommended outbound heading of 300° after station passage.



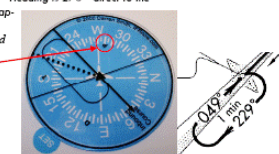
Direct Entry—Heading is 270° direct to the

PLUMY intersection to enter the hold. Point the arrow at 241° and Visi-Hold shows a Direct entry.



Parallel Entry—Heading is 270° direct to the

VOR to enter the approach. Point the arrow at 045° and Visi-Hold shows a Parallel entry.



Airline Delays... a note from a reader

Graduate Degree Survey: Airline Overbooking Policy Survey

I am currently trying to gather survey data for my graduate research project at Embry Riddle Aeronautical University. I would appreciate it if you could take the time to fill out a short survey to assist in my data collection (URL below).

The survey is only 7 questions long. Thank you in advance for your time and assistance in taking this survey.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WHV7TPJ>

Christopher Rupp

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IFR Checkride Reviewer

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package is designed to help you to get through the Instrument Checkride. Includes [Radio Communications Guide](#) as a chapter and [Visi-Hold](#). This package can be used as a self study guide or by flight instructors to provide an Instrument Proficiency Check (IPC), Flight Review (BFR) for instrument rated pilots or Instrument Checkride preparation. Designed to fit in your flight bag, size: 8.5x5.5 Priority Mail, arrives in 2-3 days. Price: \$24.95 (free shipping to US addresses) ISBN: 978-0-9823940-0-7



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Finally... Drones in the Sky

FAA under pressure to open US skies to drones

WASHINGTON (AP) - Unmanned aircraft have proved their usefulness and reliability in the war zones of Afghanistan and Iraq. Now the pressure's on to allow them in the skies over the United States. The Federal Aviation Administration has been asked to issue flying rights for a range of pilotless planes to carry out civilian and law-enforcement functions but has been hesitant to act. Officials are worried that they might plow into airliners, cargo planes and corporate jets that zoom around at high altitudes, or helicopters and hot air balloons that fly as low as a few hundred feet off the ground. On top of that, these pilotless aircraft come in a variety of sizes. Some are as big as a small airliner, others the size of a backpack. The tiniest are small enough to fly through a house window. The obvious risks have not deterred the civilian demand for pilotless planes. Tornado researchers want to send them into storms to gather data. Energy companies want to use them to monitor pipelines. State police hope to send them up to capture images of speeding cars' license plates. Local police envision using them to track fleeing suspects. Like many robots, the planes have advantages over humans for jobs that are dirty, dangerous or dull.

The Predator B, already in use for border patrol, can fly for 20 hours without refueling, compared with a helicopter's average flight time of just over two hours. Homeland Security wants to expand their use along the borders of Mexico and Canada, and along coastlines for spotting smugglers of drugs and illegal aliens. The Coast Guard wants to use them for search and rescue. The National Transportation Safety Board held a forum in 2008 on safety concerns associated with pilotless aircraft after a Predator crashed in Arizona.

The board concluded the ground operator remotely controlling the plane had inadvertently cut off the plane's fuel. Texas officials, including Gov. Rick Perry, Sens. Kay Bailey Hutchison and John Cornyn, and Rep. Henry Cuellar, have been leaning on the FAA to approve requests to use unmanned aircraft along the Texas-Mexico border. Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano has told lawmakers that safety concerns are behind the delays.

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