

# THE SENTINEL



OFFICIAL SAFETY NEWSLETTER OF CIVIL AIR PATROL

## Houston, We Have a Problem

We have only a few days left until the end of the 2006 Fiscal Year. This year, CAP pilots have already totally destroyed three CAP Cessna 182's through carelessness and reckless acts. True we have a new year just around the bend that will give us another opportunity to be Safer. However, if our Safety mindset doesn't change, it could be another year of same song, different verse.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have found two trends that are common in the string of Mishaps that are happening within CAP. The first is that 72% of all CAP aircraft Mishaps are performed by members that have only completed Level 1. The relevance of that is they never gave themselves the opportunity to learn about the inner workings of the Civil Air Patrol. You can relate that to already learned relationships you have with your friends and family. The more you learn about them, the closer you become and the more you care and identify with their needs and welfare.

Sure you joined CAP to fly. Sure you found it the cheapest way to fly the best maintained aircraft. Now we come to the second trend. Why then do we have that "Rental Car Attitude"? We pick up the keys, give it a cursory walk-around, if that, go fly and come back, park it and leave any problems for the next guy.

We are constantly finding inadequate pre-flights and little or no post-flights. There is no excuse for not making one last walk around before entering the cockpit. At this time your eyes will check for any damage, Remove Before Flight streamers, chocks installed, tow bar installed, tie downs still attached, cowl plugs still installed or pitot covers still installed. Our pilots have tried to taxi or fly their aircraft with every one of these items still in place. That is why we continue to find problems and no one knows how long it has been broken.

You say this couldn't possibly happen. How about the aircraft that flew one month with 1" missing from one of the propeller blade tips? Everyone noticed the vibration but only a former NER Commander saw the problem. The aircraft was being flown in for routine maintenance and upon shut down, the commander went over to the aircraft and asked the pilot, "Didn't you notice any vibration"? The pilot said yes, however this aircraft is noted for a bad vibration. Then he was shown the reason why. The propeller had been broken so long it had begun to corrode at the break.

This year we have had six Hangar Mishaps and have had three aircraft taxi with the tow bar still installed. We even had two pilots fly a complete proficiency



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check with the tow bar still installed.

We had a flight crew that wanted to write up the engine for overheating. They had flown the entire flight with the cowl plugs still installed. You name it and our pilots have done it.

These are only some of a myriad of problems we have had. What we need are suggestions for solutions. One Operation CAPSafe entry was sent in suggesting that after installing the tow-bar, if your hand was to be removed from the tow-bar, the tow-bar was to be removed from the aircraft.

Another suggestion is, before your last entry into the cockpit before flight, make one more cursory walk around the aircraft to check for anything you might have missed, cowl plugs, chocks, tie-downs, RBF streamers, pitot covers, tow-bar, damage, etc. Sometimes you may see more from a distance than you would up close.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are only asking for a Safety mindset and good ole everyday horse sense. Think about what you are going to do before you do it and say, "could this cause damage or injury to anything or anyone". With that, you have just completed the first step in Risk Management. One last item you should always remember, "The person you see in the mirror every morning is the person most responsible for your Safety".

**Col. Lyle Letteer**

### **Protecting Our Cadets From Strangers**

A CAP cadet was approached, while on a mission at the local county fair, by a man in civilian clothes identifying himself as a CAP member. He ordered the cadet to go with him to look for a missing child. After the cadet was discovered missing, radio calls were made and the cadet was located and returned to his post.

The cadet was unharmed, the missing child was found, but the man was not a

CAP member. How many of your cadets would also leave their post, alone, with an unknown adult when asked for help?

Abduction of 12 to 17 year-old youths by child predators, who are masters at persuasion, is a nation-wide problem. Various tricks strangers use to lure our youth are: asking for directions or help in finding a lost pet or person; requesting help for a faked injury; posing as an authority figure and asking the youth to leave with them; or relaying a false request by a "parent" to pick up their child due to a family crisis. The cadet's name can be obtained from their nametag.

What procedures and policies are in place or could be implemented in your squadron that addresses these and other scenarios that will protect our cadets and prevent them from any awkward or potentially harmful situations?

North Central Region Commander Col. Steve Kuddes offers these suggestions. During community service missions, cadets should work in pairs. If they must work alone, they should stay close enough to other members to always remain in visual contact. Have frequent radio check-ins.

Designate a roamer to patrol and assure all are present and accounted for. Cadets should switch posts often. This prevents a predator from having the time to spot, select and formulate a plan and return for an abduction.

Col. Kuddes encourages wings to set guidelines for their members serving in public places. Officers should review CPPT. Cadets should take orders only from predetermined CAP members. Cadets should not leave their post to assist strangers, but should direct strangers asking for assistance to an officer or the command center.

For more information on the Safety of our youth, please check these websites, <http://www.kidsave.com> or <http://www.missingkids.com>.

**Lt. Col. Brenda Allison**