



HAZARDOUS ATTITUDES

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Now that we seem to be able to emerge from what might be the worst medical hazard in recent memory, we are scraping off the rust on our flying skills and getting back to the business that Civil Air Patrol is engaged in. We are all busy updating our qualifications and recruiting new members, seniors, and cadets alike. In this process we are engaged in evaluations of skills and performance for many tasks including airmanship and decision making. Seasoned pilots and those seeking more experience all utilize their skills in making decisions based on their experience and knowledge. These same pilots are also subject to hazardous attitudes when dealing with the analysis of situations they find themselves in.

The FAA has long been concerned about the decision making skills of pilots and the adverse attitudes that can impede their ability to reach a good conclusion based on the situation they find themselves in. The Pilot's Handbook of Aeronautical Knowledge devotes Chapter 2 to this topic ([PHAK Chapter 2 \(faa.gov\)](#)) and the impact on aviation safety. The same concern applies to CAP and our safety program, for flying activities and all other ground-based tasks. It is worth reviewing the hazardous attitudes and the "antidote" for them and consider how they apply to CAP.

First, and probably the worst is "Anti-authority" or "Don't tell me." This attitude is found in people who do not like anyone telling them what to do. We have certainly seen this attitude on display recently across a wide cross section of our nation's population. People sometimes have a hard time understating the purpose of rules, regulations, and procedures, often viewing them as silly or unnecessary. However, the rules are very often the result of careful safety data analysis and accident investigations. The antidote for this attitude? "Follow the rules. They are usually right."

Aviation is often viewed as a hazardous activity by many, and when things do go wrong it is often thought that doing something immediately is the best course of action. The hazardous attitude? "Impulsivity: "Do it quickly."" This is the attitude of people who frequently feel the need to do something, anything, immediately. Think of an aircraft spin as one example. If you do not stop to think about what the proper procedure is, you may not select the best course of action. This can make the situation much worse in a hurry. The antidote? "Not so fast. Think first."

You might remember the old saying "there are old pilots, and bold pilots, but there are no old, bold pilots". While we have a few standout pilots that have accumulated lots of experience in bold situations, the likelihood of there being many of these is exceptionally low. We are seeing some young pilots and some more seasoned ones developing the hazardous attitude of invulnerability or "It won't happen to me." You can believe that accidents happen to others, but will never happen to you, right up until the time that it does happen to you. Accidents can happen and do happen to anyone. Pilots that think that they are immune from accidents are creating a higher risk for themselves and their crews. The antidote? Realize that "It could happen to me."

Pilots are more likely than most to be the type that try to prove that they are better than anyone else. They think, "I can do it—I'll show them." Pilots with this type of hazardous attitude will try to prove themselves and others by taking unnecessary risks to keep their image intact. The Macho type or "I can do it" attitude gets people in trouble more often than you might imagine. The antidote for this type of behavior? Think "Taking chances is foolish."

Finally.... there is Resignation: "What's the use?" Straight from the FAA they describe this attitude this way "Pilots who think, "What's the use?" do not see themselves as being able to make a great deal of difference in what happens to them. When things go well, the pilot is apt to think that it is good luck. When things go badly, the pilot may feel that someone is out to get them or attribute it to bad luck. The pilot will leave the action to others, for better or worse. Sometimes, such pilots will even go along with unreasonable requests just to be a "nice guy."" The antidote relies on the pilot realizing "I'm not helpless. I can make a difference."

Everyone in CAP has a role in the safe conduct of all our activities. There is little room for the hazardous attitudes described here. Also, the resignation attitude is especially concerning. We can all contribute by recognizing these attitudes and saying something about them. Letting them go unchecked when we see them in someone is a recipe for disaster.

Source Link:

Pilots Handbook of Aeronautical Knowledge

[PHAK Chapter 2 \(faa.gov\)](#)



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