

# Jumpseat

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## Where I Stand on Safety

I am one of you—an airman. As a teenage line-boy, I spent hours fueling the planes I dreamed of flying. The airport was my second home. My passion for aviation became the driving force behind single- and multi-engine ratings, a CFI, an ATP, and an eventual airline career.

My passion for aviation, its people, and safety is the driving force behind my “day job.” As FAA Administrator, I am honored to lead the most professional aviation safety organization in the world.

I’m passionate about safety, and I’m determined to see the general aviation safety record improve. My staff and I anguish over accidents that take the lives of our pilots, families, and friends. When I read through the fatal GA accident reports, I often shake my head. Why do GA pilots still have so many accidents that defy logic?

Understanding the “why” is critical to the “how” of preventing accidents and allowing us to focus on the joy of our favorite pastime. That is why I am privileged to introduce and encourage your participation in the 2011 FAA Safety Team Safety Standdown. This year’s theme is *Stand Up to Error, Stand Down for Safety*, and that is exactly what I am asking you to do. You can participate at the main Standdown site in Lakeland, Fla., on April 2, at one of the more than 90 Standdown events around the country during the month of April, online at [www.FAASafety.gov](http://www.FAASafety.gov), or through your perusal of this magazine.

### The Right Attitude

Our research shows several critical areas where training and focus can improve GA safety performance. The FAASTeam Safety Standdown and *FAA Safety Briefing* teams have worked closely together to bring you workshops and articles targeted to these specific areas.

The first, *Positive Flight Attitude*, is at the top of my list. Don’t confuse getting paid to fly with being a professional pilot. Every one of us needs to be committed to professionalism, whether you are a student pilot or a grizzled veteran. Each of us must

approach every flight as if our lives depended on it because our lives *do* depend on it—and not just our lives. Professionalism should characterize every action we take.

The second is *Going Beyond Preflight*. Did you check the forecast with the same diligence you displayed when you were on page one of your first logbook? Did you do a thorough preflight, notwithstanding that icy wind? Are your charts up-to-date and in your hands?

The third focus area is *En Route Cruise*. Are you lackadaisical, or are you paying the kind of attention professionalism demands? That means doing the right thing even when no one is looking. It means precision piloting: staying on altitude, on heading, and on task.

Last, but not least, is *Maneuvering Flight*. Loss of control in maneuvering flight often results from inattention to airspeed. See page 20 for some basic airspeed awareness tips, and always remember that attention to airspeed is critical.

Aviation in our country has never been safer. Still, we can—we must—do better. I hope this year’s Safety Standdown gives you food for thought, as well as concrete ways to improve your safety practices.

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