

The following provide one possible answer to the Discussion Questions

1. Why do pilots skip NOTAMs even when they know better?

Preferred answer:

Pilots skip NOTAMs because the NOTAM system is overloaded with low-value items, poorly organized, and time-consuming to parse. This leads to “NOTAM fatigue,” where pilots assume that most NOTAMs are irrelevant. When combined with familiarity with the destination, good weather, or a casual mission mindset, pilots default to expectation rather than verification.

Key justification:

This explanation aligns with FAA human-factors findings and is widely recognized in safety literature.

2. What is the risk of relying on third-party apps for airport status?

Preferred answer:

Third-party apps may not display NOTAMs prominently, may filter or summarize them, or may require extra taps to reveal critical information. They are not authoritative sources, and pilots may mistakenly believe that “the app would have shown it” when, in fact, the app’s presentation obscured the closure. This creates a false sense of completeness.

Key justification:

FAA guidance explicitly states that only official FAA sources (FNS, FSS, NOTAM Search) are authoritative.

3. What is the minimum acceptable NOTAM review for a Part 91 cross-country?

Preferred answer:

At minimum, a Part 91 pilot must review all NOTAMs for:

- **Departure airport**
- **Destination airport**
- **Alternate (if used)**
- **En route airspace and nav aids**

And the review must come from an **authoritative FAA source** (FSS briefing, FAA NOTAM Search, or an EFB that explicitly confirms FAA NOTAM synchronization). Anything less fails the regulatory requirement to be familiar with “all available information.”

Key justification:

This is directly grounded in 14 CFR 91.103.

4. How can instructors enforce NOTAM discipline in student pilots?

Preferred answer:

Instructors enforce NOTAM discipline by making NOTAM review a **graded, mandatory, repeatable habit**. This includes:

- Requiring students to brief NOTAMs aloud before every flight
- Asking targeted questions (“What’s the runway status? Any closures?”)
- Having students show the authoritative source, not a summary
- Demonstrating how to filter out noise while still catching critical items
- Treating NOTAM review as a checklist item, not an optional step

Key justification:

This aligns with FAA instructional best practices for risk management and preflight planning.

5. What barriers failed here, and which ones could have prevented the accident?

Preferred answer:

The barriers that failed were:

- **Pilot preflight planning:** NOTAMs were not reviewed.
- **Tool selection:** A non-authoritative website was used.
- **Expectation bias:** The pilot assumed the runway would be open.
- **Lack of cross-checking:** No FSS call, no ATIS/ASOS review, no alternate source.

The barriers that could have prevented the accident were:

- A proper NOTAM review from an FAA source

- A cross-check with FSS or NOTAM Search
- A habit of verifying runway status even at familiar airports
- Instructor-instilled discipline in NOTAM review

Key justification:

These barriers map directly to the causal chain in DFW07CA092 and are consistent with FAA risk-management models (PAVE, 3P, DECIDE).
