



Colorado Wing Safety Newsletter

September 2023

The need for safety is continuous, permanent, and limitless. Safety protects and serves the CAP to provide the best attributes of behavior, human action, and conditions to create a safe environment for all CAP activities. The CAP Safety Program is meant to protect CAP members from death and injury and at the same time minimizing loss and damage to property.

“Safety First” Means It's Always Best to Avoid any Unnecessary Risks. The slogan “Safety first” means it's always best to be safe rather than sorry. Taking precautions keep us safe from all sorts of mishaps. The core of Significant Safety Occurrence (SSO) prevention consists of foreseeing unsafe conditions and of rectifying them before an SSO occurs. Investigation of an SSO, even if it has not resulted in injury, aids in pinpointing the deficiencies in planning and helps in preventing recurrence of mishaps. Seniors and cadets have an obligation to stop an activity that is unsafe. CAP members must be trained, competent and fit for CAP activities. All activities must **not** be conducted without a risk assessment appropriate to that level of risk.

This newsletter for Colorado Wing (COWG) members covers a variety of topics related to senior and cadet safety and operations. It is extremely important that all Colorado Wing CAP members consider that safety and Risk Management (RM) must be factored into everything that we do.

The COWG Safety Newsletter is published each quarter. Wing members are encouraged to submit safety subjects for consideration for inclusion in the newsletter to COWG/SE (LtCol Rick Couch, email: rsmileyc@gmail.com).

Monthly Safety Education

CAPR 160-2, paragraph 5.2.1 requires all cadets and senior members receive safety education at least once each calendar month. Safety briefings are available in eServices to meet this requirement. Also, the Wing Safety Officer (COWG/SE) will send a monthly safety briefing that can be used to meet the requirement. Group/Squadron Safety Officers are responsible for completing this requirement. Please remember to get this done.

Make a Suggestion/Report a Hazard

Have you seen something that is safe but with a little attention could be even safer. If so, please go into CAPSIS and “Make a Suggestion/Report a Hazard”. Members of your unit should be familiar with this capability. You can make a safety improvement suggestion or report unsafe equipment, conditions, practices, rules, attitudes, etc., which may constitute a hazard to CAP personnel or equipment. If you see something, then say something. It may save us from having a mishap.

Entering a Safety Significant Occurrence (SSO)

CAP Regulation 160-2, "Safety Reporting, Reviewing, and Action Planning" defines an SSO as any observed outcome occurring during a CAP mission, activity, or other event that resulted in or could have resulted in damage to equipment or a facility, injury to a member, and/or a member's illness. Specific guidance on reporting an SSO is detailed in paragraph 6 and Attachment 4 of the regulation. Any event described above must be entered into the CAP Safety Information System (CAPSIS) within 48 hours of the event. All CAP members should take the **Reporting a SSO** in AXIS. You must take this course to enter an SSO in CAPSIS.

If you need to enter an SSO in CAPSIS, before you start putting data in the system, please first talk with your squadron commander or squadron safety officer. There are specific reporting requirements that must be met, and your commander is responsible for this reporting. Also, you need to talk with the COWG/SE (LtCol Rick Couch, email: rsmileyc@gmail.com) before designating that the initial report is complete.

Fall

Before long summer will turn to fall. Fall usually brings cooler, dry weather. But what is lurking ahead is that first cold front that can bring our first snow and ice. When this happens, a lot changes. Vehicle operations require winter driving skills. Airplane operations in the mountains and plains require aircrews to be prepared for cold weather survival skills especially for an off-field recovery. Ground operations and searches require cold weather planning for clothes and equipment commensurate for the weather and terrain conditions. We all need to be ready for the change in season – it will come when we least expect it.

Aircraft Operations

The following message came from the Safety Office at National Headquarters:

Did you know? More than one-third of CAP aircraft safety occurrences could be mitigated with increased emphasis and action on proficiency flying and flying with an instructor focused on the maneuvers in Profile 7 (powered aircraft) and Profiles 11 and 12 (gliders). The maneuvers in these profiles support increased proficiency and experience for:

- Stabilized approaches to landing
- Short/Soft field takeoff and landing
- Proper pitch attitude on takeoff and landing
- Go arounds
- Emergency approach to landing

Emphasis in these areas has a positive safety impact on damage resulting from loss of positive aircraft control during takeoff and landing. Flying with an instructor and getting constructive feedback at least every six months could make a major difference.

Airworthiness and safety of flight issues are a major challenge for us. It's critical that all of the COWG aircrews address the issues discussed above because we care about the safety of our members and equipment and we do not want to expose anyone to unnecessary risk. All of our core values demand our commitment to addressing safety both in our systems and in practice, including immediate self-reporting of issues that impact the safety of flight so we can protect our teammates and CAP as a whole.

We're still seeing a significant number of occurrences of unreported damage to aircraft ("unreported" meaning the damage was discovered after-the-fact by maintenance personnel during an inspection or by pilots conducting a pre-flight) – especially damage to tail tie-down rings and nose gear damage. Conducting post-flight inspections and reporting noted damage or other discrepancies is an important activity to emphasize with pilots. We also need your support and emphasis on self-reporting landings that could cause unsee-able damage to nose gear components, firewall, and more (porpoising or nose-gear first landings, in particular). Self-reporting should mean a phone call to the unit commander and wing commander, as well as grounding of the aircraft in coordination with the AMO until such time as it can be inspected by one of our approved maintenance vendors. **The aircraft must not be flown until it is evaluated and documented as repaired and/or otherwise returned to service.** Be sure to ensure all aircraft damage is reported in CAPSIS as well.

You are a critical link in the safety chain, and we appreciate your leadership to get this concern addressed. It will pay dividends toward our readiness, reliability, and credibility in service to our members, communities, and partners.”

Aircrews have probably noticed that on most days with good flying weather the number of aircraft in the pattern has increased. At towered airports the controllers do a good job of handling the traffic. At non towered airfields, our pilots are responsible for maintaining separation from other traffic and conducting safe operations. Are you familiar with FAA Advisory Circular 90.66C? You should be!

AC 90.66c, **Non-Towered Flight Operations**, calls attention to regulatory requirements, recommended operations, and communications procedures for operating at an airport without a control tower or an airport with a control tower that operates only part time. It recommends traffic patterns, communications phraseology, and operational procedures for use by aircraft, lighter-than-air aircraft, gliders, parachutes, rotorcraft, and ultralight vehicles. This AC stresses safety as the primary objective in these operations.

Another document that is important to non-towered operations is CFR 91.113, **Right-Of-Way Rules**. This regulation states that when weather conditions permit, regardless of whether an operation is conducted under instrument flight rules or visual flight rules, vigilance shall be maintained by each person operating an aircraft so as to see and avoid other aircraft. When a rule gives another aircraft the right-of-way, the pilot shall give way to that aircraft and may not pass over, under, or ahead of it unless well clear. If you haven't read this CFR recently you should review it, so you know the rules of the road.

Injury-Illness

HYDRATION remains a major consideration for all outside activities. Even with the emphasis on hydration, we still find that cadets and seniors don't drink enough fluids. Don't become the person that needs medical aid because you haven't been hydrating. Drink water before and after CAP activities. It isn't that hard. If you are in charge of an activity, make sure to provide water to other participants. Hydration is extremely important. Know the symptoms for dehydration and how to respond if someone shows signs of extreme dehydration. Always drink enough fluids so that you are never thirsty.

Fainting is an issue that we see too frequently. Generally, the person fainting ends up falling to the ground/floor. Luckily, we have haven't any serious injuries from this event, but the possibility of serious injuries is always there. Please remind seniors and cadets that if they start feeling faint to knee or sit down in place. Let those around you know that you don't feel good and get appropriate help.

Vehicle Operations

How often do we have "good" weather during searches? Driving in Colorado can expose you to multiple hazards in a single road trip. We have very crowded paved roads. We have rural or gravel roads. Weather conditions can change quickly. One minute the sun is out and the next we can have freezing rain or snow.

Speed is the biggest factor in most vehicle accidents. People continue to use their phones to text or make calls even though we aren't supposed to do this. Eye strain be a distraction - is it sunny, cloudy, or "bright" because of the sun and clouds? Think of all the other factors that can make any drive in Colorado stressful.

So, what actions can you take to minimize the risks associated with operation of a CAP vehicle. On paved roads maintain the posted speeds and following distances behind other vehicles. On rural or gravel roads watch for hidden potholes or blind curves, especially at night. To account for changing weather conditions, consider what you can do to your vehicle to prepare it for weather? Before your trip, whether in a CAP vehicle or your private vehicle, check the weather.

Think about the way to minimize the risks discussed earlier? Did we pick the right roads? Were there better options given the conditions? For changing weather conditions - would it make sense to depart earlier or later? For speed, should you adjust for weather or traffic or road conditions? How can you deal with eye strain? Do you have sunglasses or a hat to help reduce this issue? Do you have a plan if something happens unexpectedly?

In summary, performing a risk assessment gives you time to decide if you need to make changes in your plan. Even after a successful trip or mission, was there anything that could have been done better? Always review your decision making. Don't be afraid to say "we will be late, but we will be there" if the conditions warrant!