



The French language version of this Bulletin for our francophone members follows in a separate e-mail.

Safety Advisory

Fellow free flyers,

Following is the first 2017 Official HPAC Safety Notice.

Safety Notices will come to you twice a year from now or more often, as needed. Safety deserves its own means of communication after all! They will also be posted on the Facebook HPAC/ACVL page at

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1203572566353229/>.

A Safety mindset is a core value for our Association and our members. We encourage every pilot to take an active role in their flying community to promote safe practices. Please be open to suggestions or questions from others when they express concerns to you on launch or after a flight. By the same token, please express your own concerns when other pilots' behaviours endanger themselves or fellow pilots. Understandably this is hard to do, but a deliberate culture of safety will benefit all of us, if it leads to fewer accidents and incidents.

Please file all accident and incident reports diligently and promptly. These reports are vital for analysis and compiling statistics so that our sport can steadily improve its safe performance. <http://www.hpac.ca/pub/?pid=50>

Our sister Association, USHPA, produces regular Safety Bulletins for its members. They have graciously allowed us to send you their Accident Review Committee's recent Bulletins, written by Mitch Shipley and Chris Santacroce, names well known in the Canadian HG and PG community as well.

Spring flying conditions and the extra burden they place on sound decision-making is the subject of the first piece; the second discusses mid-air collisions, which have seen a resurgence lately, often with serious consequences. They are also most often completely avoidable.

The only goal for the season should be an accident-free season!

Fly high, fly far, fly safe.

Tom Sliepen, HPAC Saskatchewan Director

For HPAC Board of Directors

And HPAC Safety Committee, Souzanne Francoeur and Tyler Gillies

(safety@hpac.ca)



A Friendly Reminder from the Accident Review Committee

Dear Member:

We are taking a moment to reach out to you today on the subject of Spring flying and our ultimate goal of helping you to enjoy free flying over the decades. Each year, we all dust off our flying equipment and spread our wings. It's a joyous time and nothing quite compares to getting back in the air after a hiatus.

Thankfully, we have our instructors and our community to help us to get re-current. Reserve repacks, cautionary posts on social media, and friends helping friends to exercise restraint get juxtaposed against our starry-eyed and sometimes misguided ambition for personal bests.

Of course, free flying is a ruthless judge. The pursuit challenges us to avoid common pitfalls, to exercise restraint and to make sure that our shortcomings don't define us. Yet there lies the heart of our current challenge. It's springtime and the usual scenarios are unfolding across the country. Pilots are showing up at their sites, and in many cases flying in conditions that are too strong. Thankfully, other pilots chime in with their opinions about the flyability of the day and caution others to stand down. In most cases, admonished pilots will indeed stand down and thank whoever had seen fit to help them stay out of harm's way. It's a beautiful gesture, and it is a cornerstone of our free flying community.

Here's the crux. In several recent cases, pilots have chosen to fly despite the good advice of their fellow pilots. In several recent and specific cases, the results have been bad, even tragic.

We urge you to please be selective about the air you fly in, revisit the operating limitations for your rating, confer with your local mentors when assessing conditions, and when someone goes out of their way to try and help you avoid making a bad decision, please listen, take heed and stand down. Asking a fellow pilot to stand down is probably the kindest thing that a person can do for another. If you see someone about to make a bad decision, say something.

Thank you in advance for factoring this into your decision-making. We encourage you to share this message and we welcome your feedback on the subject. Realizing that accidents do happen, we still feel that the only acceptable goal is an accident free season. We would like to challenge every member to assess their decisions on a moment to moment basis.

Sincerely,
Chris Santacroce & Mitch Shipley
USHPA Accident Review Committee Co-Chairs
accident_review@ushpa.org

Report an Incident

This is an official periodic E-Newsletter of the USHPA. The intent is to provide members with information pertaining to the organization and other aspects of the free flight community. Please [send us feedback](#) about this newsletter. Your comments are very much appreciated.





Accident Review Committee Mid-Air Incidents

[View This Article On The USHPA Website](#)

Dear Member:

Welcome to the second edition of the USHPA Accident Review Committee Outreach for 2017. Our first outreach was very well-received, with a lot of great feedback. We have a new round of information for you and we hope that you find it to be useful.

Mid-Air Incidents: A Recent Trend

Several mid air incidents have occurred with some unusual and remarkable commonalities. There have been incidents of mid airs when only a few people were flying. There have been some incidents where both parties were actually quite familiar with one another (friends, family, or familiar outside of flying).

We'd like to remind all pilots that it is easy to become complacent when the site is not crowded (or less crowded than usual). It is also worth noting that there is a certain strange attraction between pilots who are friends, or who are learning together. **Various situations present an increased risk of mid air contact:** husband and wife are flying together, parent and child are both aloft, a student shares the air with their instructor (especially for the first time), or any situation involving cameras.

Avoiding Mid-Air Incidents

In an effort to avoid any of these pitfalls, when you are flying with friends, family, or your instructor/student you might want to make extra effort to stay in separate airspace. We remind pilots to take care when it is not crowded, as well as when it is crowded. There is also an added risk for pilots who are flying with cameras, trying to get that extra special shot. Keeping an eye out for a photo opportunity could be distracting, and looking through a viewfinder can reduce one's overall situational awareness.

Formation flying should be avoided in general. If it is contemplated, then it should theoretically be done by advanced pilots in very favorable conditions with prior communication, planning, and explicit consent by both parties. Pilots should always make sure that all parties can fly away from the formation easily and safely if they become uncomfortable at any point. No other pilots in the air should be in harm's way as a result of a few pilots wanting to fly close to each other.

Assessing and Mitigating the Risk

Finally, we remind pilots to ask themselves: is the risk of flying with a lot of traffic really worth it? How would you feel if you had a mid air accident at a crowded ridge just trying to win the daily sink-out contest or eke out a few extra minutes of flight time?

Please remember to use common, recommended practices for **clear communication**, like yelling "clear" or "launching" before taking off. Follow the ridge rules knowing that most ridge flying environments are three-dimensional, and that all pilots need to be flexible with the ridge rules: **see and avoid!** Be aware of

all of the people in the air with you, and always **indicate your intention to turn** by looking, tilting your head, leaning, etc. to give everyone sufficient warning before executing on your actual turn. Don't be afraid to yell. Have some words on the tip of your tongue - something like "look out", "heads up", "on your right." It's worth knowing that as soon as one person yells in traffic, all the people flying at that time will start paying more attention. Sometimes it's hard to tell who's yelling so don't be afraid to kick your feet or somehow identify yourself as the one who is uncomfortable.

If you need to make a course correction to avoid a traffic conflict, please do it early. Most near miss accounts include at least one party having recognized the situation quite early, but then waiting to take corrective action until it was quite late.

Help Us Help You

As always, we welcome your feedback on these subjects and we encourage you to report *all* incidents and accidents. This information is gathered for statistical analysis, and so that we can identify trends that are worth pointing out to the pilot population. **The only acceptable goal for this season is zero mid airs.**

Sincerely,
Chris Santacroce & Mitch Shipley
USHPA Accident Review Committee Co-Chairs
accident_review@ushpa.org

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