



## **SAFETY GRAM**

December 2016

There's an old saying in aviation "Fly it from the time the engine starts until you shut the engine down". I'm not exactly sure who came up with it but its pure genius. This month, let's refresh ourselves on aircraft taxiing. Taxiing requires an enormous amount of situational awareness. Pilots must thoroughly understand taxiing procedures and be proficient in maintaining control of aircraft direction and speed of movement on the ground. Additionally, pilots must be alert and visually check the location and movements of everything else along the taxi path.

Due to our Aero Clubs primarily being associated with towered/controlled airfields; we have the luxury of utilizing ground control to aid in day-to-day operations. Understanding the shared responsibility between pilots and ground control is absolutely critical to safety. I know that pilots believe we are all knowing; however I can personally attest to the falseness of that thought. In this marriage considered as safety, pilots are heavily reliant on ground control to provide a clear picture of the aerodrome. In return, pilots must aid ground control with position reports and aggressively clearing for hazards. More times than not, taxi incidents are avoided as a result of good communication between pilots and ground control.

Additionally, the majority of general aviation aircraft operate out of non-towered/non-controlled airfields. Operations in this environment require pilots to maintain awareness of other aircraft that are taxiing, taking off, landing or practicing multiple approaches. The consideration for the right of way of others is essential to safety.

Finally, I'll leave you with this little nugget. While taxiing, pilots must be sure the airplane's wings will clear all obstructions and other aircraft. If at any time there is any doubt about the clearance of the wingtips, pilots should stop the airplane and have someone check the amount of clearance from the object. If no help is available, consider shutting down the engine and having the aircraft physically moved by ground crew.

Please reference AFI 34-117, P.32, sections 4.17.6.7, 4.17.6.8, and 4.17.6.9.

To most people, the sky is the limit. To those who love aviation, the sky is home.

**FLY SAFELY!**



**Maj Derrick L. Hodges Jr., Director of Operations & Safety, USAF Aero Clubs**  
**derrick.hodges.1@us.af.mil; DSN 969-7232, (210) 395-7232**