



SAFETY GRAM

January 2017

Let me begin by saying Happy New Year and thank you for your continued support of the Aero Club program. As we usher in 2017, let's continue to be the benchmark and exceed the general aviation standard for safety. We are privileged to have outstanding club managers, instructors, maintainers and patrons. Keep flying safe; keep our clubs strong!

Now that the pep talk is out of the way, let's get down to business. Clearing, clearing, clearing and more clearing! I used to have an old instructor that would say "You'd be a heck of a pilot if I could ever get you to look outside". He was right! Often times, due to technological advancements in the cockpit, we tend to be heads down instead of focusing on being heads up.

Referencing VFR flight operations; did you know that nearly all midair collisions occur during daylight hours and in VFR conditions? What may not be so surprising is that the majority of those collisions happen within five miles of an airport where the greatest concentration of traffic exist. There are multiple factors that may cause a midair collision but statistics show that most often noted is a failure of pilots to see the other aircraft.

This month let's take a little time and focus on scanning techniques. Is there a perfect scan? Absolutely not, or at least there is no one scan that best fits all pilots. Therefore, the most important thing for each pilot to develop is a scanning method that is both easy and reliable. Your best defense against midair collisions is an efficient scan pattern.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) studies show scans that have proven best for most pilots are variations on a technique called the "block" system. This type of scan is based on the theory that traffic detection can be made through a series of eye fixations at different points in space. Each of these fixes becomes the focal point of your field of vision (a block 10-15° wide). By fixating every 10-15 degrees wide), you should be able to detect any contrasting or moving object in each block. This gives you 9-12 "blocks" in your scan area, each requiring a minimum of one to two seconds for accommodation and detection.

In a nutshell, if we continue to adhere to good airmanship, keeping ourselves and our airplanes in good condition and develop effective scanning techniques, we should have no trouble avoiding midair collisions. Let's take this month to stress the importance of looking outside. What we'll find is that using our eyes properly will benefit us in many ways. Despite limitations, our eyes provide us with color, shape, motion and excitement. Keep training them to spot minute targets in the sky and we'll also learn to see many other important "little" things.

FLY SAFELY!



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