



SAFETY GRAM

March 2017

*****WARNING*****

Never approach or walk through the propeller area on any running aircraft unless your job requires you to be there

This month let's talk Props! Thankfully, accidents and human injuries from propellers are extremely rare. Nevertheless, when prop accidents occur they tend to be serious and most of the time could have easily been avoided. I think it's fair to say we tend to get comfortable with airplane props and complacency sets in. Complacency is defined as a false sense of quiet pleasure or security, often while unaware of some potential danger, defect, or the like. It is absolutely critical that we are situationally aware anytime we're dealing with aircraft propellers.

Unfortunately, people continue to come into contact with spinning propellers, even though the danger they represent is well known. The primary risk associated with spinning blades is that they are borderline impossible to see. Since we're in the business of recreational flying, please be mindful of the level of confusion that a non-pilot may have when in the vicinity of airplane with a running engine. Do us all a favor and keep a watchful eye on the ramp.

The Aero Club safety record continues to be outstanding with regard to propeller accidents; however we always have room for improvement. Let's take this opportunity to reassess or develop safety programs that emphasize the hazards and risks associated with aircraft propellers. Well-designed and well-implemented safety programs are the key to propeller accident prevention. During our monthly safety meetings, let's challenge ourselves to have open dialogue about the dangers of props and discuss individual experiences that we can all learn from.

Finally, please direct your attention to AFI 34-117, p. 34:

4.17.13.7. Pilots shall not hand prop aero club aircraft certified to operate with an electrically driven starter.

I'll leave you with three (3) things when it comes to hand-propping an aircraft. One, it's a blatant violation of the AFI. Two, if the starter and battery doesn't work properly our airplanes are legally un-airworthy. Last, most discussions of hand-propping begin and end with "Don't". To be honest "Why would you ever want to?" a question from the wise Mr. Eric Treland.

FLY SAFE!



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