



## **SAFETY GRAM**

February 2020

Lt Col Arch, a previous Director of Operations and Safety wrote the Safety Gram below. He hits on important points, but mostly, remaining vigilant when operating the aircraft, even on the ground. At Travis, we had instances where aircraft would hit poles in the hangar or an aircraft taxiing into a parked truck.

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From takeoff to touchdown pilots are vigilant about operating their aircraft safely. Yet many breaches in safety occur during ramp operations. Although most of these situations are not fatal, they can be expensive, and usually embarrassing. People can understand and relate to a wind gust causing a pilot to land hard, or off centerline, but there is little sympathy for someone taxiing into a pole.

Most accidents during ground ops are caused by carelessness and/or lack of situational awareness. Here are some basic points that could keep you safe. This list isn't inclusive, but should get you thinking when you are out on the ramp.

1. Know the local traffic flow. Before you even step out the door, review the airport diagram and plan for where you expect to see traffic. Not just aircraft, but vehicles too.
2. Assume all magnetos are hot. I can almost end any NTSB/FAA report that starts, "The pilot was hand propping the aircraft when...." Even if you intend to start the aircraft with a hand prop, it can be disastrous, so imagine what would happen if one started and you weren't prepared. (To clarify, we don't allow hand propping Aero Club aircraft.)
3. Look before you leap. I've seen some of the worst injuries occur simply while doing the preflight. One was a pilot who while walking and looking up at the rudder gashed his head when he slipped on some ice. Another was a pilot who was walking to the aircraft, staring at what looked like a flat tire and smacked the wing so hard it took him out for the day. Look for hoses, chocks, ground wires, ladders, and other items anytime you are walking around the ramp. And always stay clear of running engines, front and back. Even the smallest jet engines can produce a 200 mph wind.
4. Drive slowly. Many airports allow cars on parts of the ramp, so if you are driving, go slow and yield to aircraft. If you are in the plane, taxi slowly...a rule of thumb in congested areas is do not taxi faster than you can walk. If you hear, say or even think the phrase, "I think we can make it" it's a good time to stop and assess the situation. I'd much rather get embarrassed

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because I stopped the engine on a taxiway and got out to look, then have to explain why I just taxied into a stationary object.

As always, enjoy your flight, follow your passion, and stay out of the headlines. If you see someone else doing something unsafe, give them a little assistance. They might just thank you.

**CONTINUE TO FLY SAFE!**

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