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## **HELLO THERE, 2011**

On behalf of the ICAS headquarters office, welcome to the 2011 air show season!

The entire ICAS family will be working hard to duplicate the recent successes that our industry has enjoyed on safety issues, an initiative that has helped to deliver two consecutive years of accident free air shows. A repeat performance can only be accomplished with your help.

At the 2010 ICAS Convention, FAA Chief Operating Officer Hank Krakowski compared safety in the air show environment to the airlines' efforts in counter-terrorism. The airlines have come under scrutiny for recent advancements in airport security; however, it is important to remember that these increased security measures are for the safety and security of the airline industry. In the air show industry, we must also remember that the heightened safety efforts are for the good of the air show industry. Through constant vigilance and awareness, we shall continue to stay the course of maintaining a safe industry. Mr. Krakowski's message holds true even more now than it did in December. We expect that this will be the year in which our industry proves that recent safety successes have not been a statistical fluke and that our entire industry is capable of avoiding the dangers of complacency.

Our first line of defense in this battle against complacency is continuous discussion of safety issues through vehicles like the ICAS Operations Bulletin, or Ops Bull. You won't need to look too far for this as you will automatically receive a bi-weekly email reminding you to check out the latest edition. If you have any comments or ideas for Ops Bull, please contact Dan Hollowell at [hollowell@airshows.aero](mailto:hollowell@airshows.aero).

## **KNOCKING OFF THE RUST**

The northern hemisphere will soon move into spring, and many pilots are knocking the ice off the hangar doors, putting fresh oil in their engines, and preparing their airplanes for the 2011 air show season. This is definitely a great cure to the cabin fever that has set in since the ICAS Convention nearly three months ago. Whether you are literally or metaphorically knocking the rust off, there are some serious things to consider while getting back into mid-season form.

Consider G tolerance. Some pilots have not flown in more than five months, but their minds are still familiar with the execution of maneuvers. This is a potentially dangerous combination. A pilot who hasn't practiced in a few months will easily remember how to execute the maneuvers of the show, but the pilot's G tolerance will be significantly lower than it was last fall, due to the lack of conditioning. The biggest mistake you can make is to forget how physically demanding the high G environment is on your body. The solution: practice often, but start slow.

When you are getting back into “show shape,” remember the lessons we have learned in the past two years. There were NO fatal accidents at North American air shows in 2009 or 2010, but we have still lost several friends during practices and en route to air shows. The ground doesn’t make a distinction between a show and a practice, between a cross-country flight and an aerobatic sequence. It will always be in the same place, and it will always produce unfavorable results should you encounter it. When practicing, you should be positive beyond equivocation that you can perform any and all maneuvers AT ALTITUDE prior to practicing your maneuvers at show level...even if they are maneuvers that you have been performing at low altitude for many years.

An informal analysis of accident trends during the last twenty years reveal two disturbing spikes: a spike near the end of each season when complacency sets in after many months of successfully flying the same routines and a similar spike at the beginning of each season when pilots have not yet settled into their normal routine. Let’s all work hard this year to buck both of those trends.

### **SELECTING YOUR AIR BOSS**

There are more than 300 air show events held each year in North America. There are less than two dozen “professional” air bosses. Although our industry has many effective and professional air bosses who work only a single show each year, the inescapable fact is that well over half the air shows in North America are being run by inexperienced, marginally-trained or -- in some cases -- completely unqualified individuals.

There is no regulatory requirement for or comprehensive definition of an air show air boss. There is no regulatory requirement for training as an air boss. There is no currency requirement or medical requirement to serve as an air show air boss, yet the air boss plays one of the major roles in assuring the safety of your event.

What should you look for when hiring an air boss?

\* You might consider looking outside your local community. Airport acquaintances and flying buddies typically do not have the requisite experience to put together a safe and entertaining air show.

\* Ask for references from at least three shows in the preceding 12 months. Call those references and ask for a confidential assessment of the air boss’s performance. Ask about the brief, the schedule, how it was set up, and how it went. Were there long delays between performers or did the air boss keep things running smoothly? How did the air boss interact with airport officials and local regulatory officials? Were there contingencies and, if so, how were they handled?

\* A good air boss will conduct a solid briefing. He or she will assure that the air show box is properly marked and have a graphic for the performers showing the reference/crowd lines, corner markers and obstacles. He will have an ingress and egress plan for the hot box and for aircraft that have to be moved from the static display area. She will want to pre-position CFR on the performance side of the crowd line and require that they have a representative present for the briefing.

\* A good air boss will know how to tighten up a loose show. He will know when to put the aircraft on the ground and when to tell a performer to “knock it off.” And he or she will not hesitate to do so.

\* A good air boss is strong willed, likes to be in charge, and can do so without creating conflict. He or she may be the difference between the success and failure of your event.

Take your time. Spend the resources. Choose wisely. Lives may depend on your selection.

### **TFR REQUESTS NOW AVAILABLE**

The Federal Aviation Administration has spent the winter months to provide the air show community with a standardized form for requesting Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs). Instructions, regional points of contact, the

TFR Advisory Circular and the TFR request worksheet are now all available at:  
<http://www.faa.gov/about/initiatives/airshow/tfr/contacts/>.

This TFR request form should be used by every air show in the United States to properly secure and sterilize the airspace prior well in advance of the show date.

### **GROUND OPERATIONS SAFETY**

While air show accidents and incidents that take place in front of the crowd line receive saturation news coverage, it is important to remember that the vast majority of incidents and insurance claims take place behind the fence. From concession tent fires to on-airport traffic accidents to weather-related accidents or injuries, our industry's strongest shows have a documented process for dealing with these events. Does your air show have a plan in place for addressing these issues as they come up?

In the summer of 2006, a Hawker Hunter crashed after takeoff during the Oregon International Air Show in Hillsboro. The show's management realized that it did not have clear guidance to follow in the event of an accident, so they committed themselves to developing a living document that has served as the basis for the show's ground operations. The OIAS invites you to take a look at their safety guidelines and ICAS encourages your air show to use what you deem pertinent to develop your own plan for incident mitigation. Their guidelines may be found [here](#).

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