



Interagency Aviation Accident Prevention Bulletin



No. IA APB 14-01

Date: January 31, 2014

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Subject: Preflight Planning

Area of Concern: Flight Safety

Distribution: All Aviation Activities

Discussion: Recently, the Alaska Flight Services Information Area Group published a study on *FAA Flight Service Contact and Aircraft Accident/Incident Risk Exposure*. The study concluded that pilots who properly prepared for a flight in accordance with FAR 91.103 and used the services of a Flight Service Station would increase their probability in making a proper go/no go decision and consequently lowering their exposure to suffering an aircraft accident or incident.

Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) 91.103 Preflight Action requires:

Each pilot in command shall, before beginning a flight, become familiar with all available information concerning that flight. This information must include—

(a) For a flight under IFR or a flight not in the vicinity of an airport, weather reports and forecasts, fuel requirements, alternatives available if the planned flight cannot be completed, and any known traffic delays of which the pilot in command has been advised by ATC;

(b) For any flight, runway lengths at airports of intended use, and the following takeoff and landing distance information:

(1) For civil aircraft for which an approved Airplane or Rotorcraft Flight Manual containing takeoff and landing distance data is required, the takeoff and landing distance data contained therein; and

(2) For civil aircraft other than those specified in paragraph (b)(1) of this section, other reliable information appropriate to the aircraft, relating to aircraft performance under expected values of airport elevation and runway slope, aircraft gross weight, and wind and temperature.

Services provided by FSS include (but not limited to): pilot briefing, flight plan handling, inflight communications, clearance delivery, local airport advisory services, Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) classification and dissemination, initiating Search and Rescue (SAR), weather observation, pilot weather report (PIREP) solicitation and dissemination. Using these services will also assist you in meeting other agency requirements (DOI: 351 DM 1.9, FSM 5700 and FSH 5709.16).





Alaska Flight Services analyzed information reported to the FAA on Form 8020-9 AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT/INCIDENT PRELIMINARY NOTICE for FY2009-FY2011. 446 accidents and incidents were reviewed. Of the 446 records, 326 aircraft (73.1%) did not make contact with the FSS.

Table 2. Accidents / Incidents and FSS Contacts.

	FAA Form 8020-9 Accidents/Incidents	Accident/Incident with No FSS Contact	Percentage of Accident/Incident Aircraft with No FSS Contact
2009	158	118	74.6
2010	134	94	70.1
2011	154	114	74.0
Total	446	326	73.1

The results of the study indicate that during the period 2009-2011, an aircraft flight which contacted the FSS was less likely to be involved in a reported accident or incident than the general flight population.

In 2011, there were 11 accidents where at least one fatality was suffered. Only 1 of these aircraft made contact with a FSS.

Table 1 2011 Fatal Accidents and FSS Contacts

Fiscal Year	Total Fatal Accidents/Fatalities	Aircraft Contacted FSS/Fatalities	Aircraft Did Not Contact FSS/Fatalities
2011	11/21	1/1	10/20

While this study focused on the FSS in Alaska, a correlation can be made for aircraft operating in the lower 48 as well. Use all available resources during preflight planning and ensure that conditions are within limits – both regulatory and personal. Proper preflight planning is an essential proactive measure to ensure a safe and successful mission.

/s/ Keith C. Raley

Keith C. Raley
Chief, Aviation Safety
and Program Evaluation

/s/ Gary Morgan

Gary Morgan
Acting Branch Chief, Aviation Safety
Management Systems