

OAS-43A
(12/12)



Interagency Aviation Accident Prevention Bulletin



No. IA APB 25-02

April 23, 2025

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Subject: Flight Deck Visibility

Area of Concern: Visibility obstructions from sunshades

Distribution: All Aviation Activities

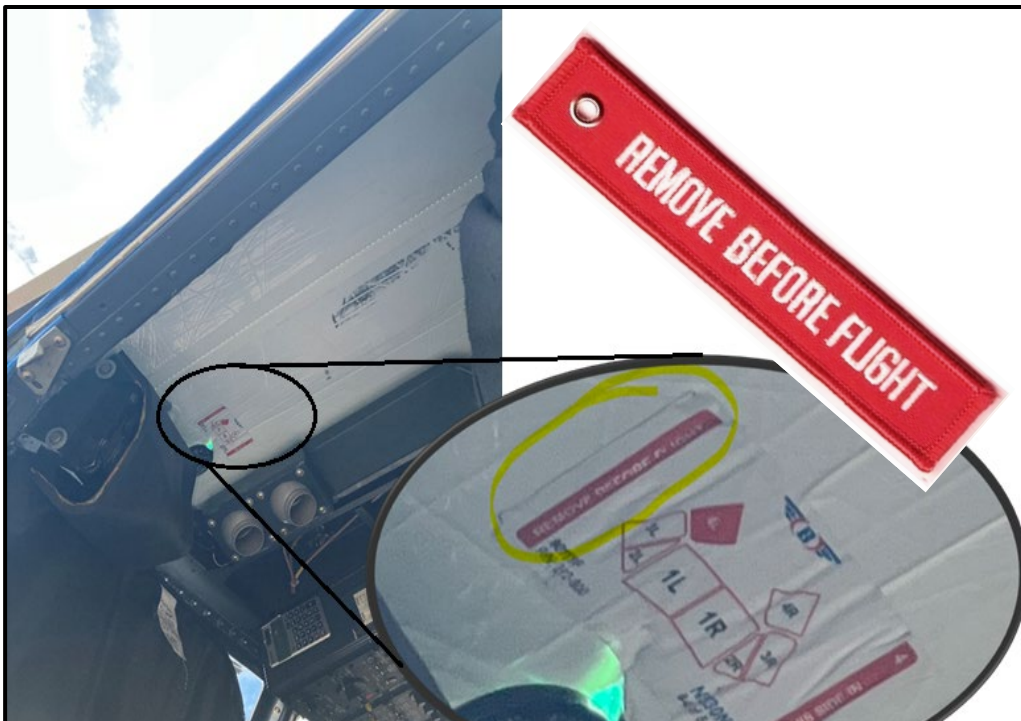
Discussion: Sunshades are a common accessory used to protect the cockpit from the sun's glare and heat when parked. While they can be useful in keeping the interior of the aircraft cool, it is crucial to remove them before takeoff. Leaving sun shades in the aircraft during a flight can obstruct the pilot's view and hinder the ability to conduct safe aircraft operations. This is especially true when operating in a busy fire traffic area when helicopters are often below other aircraft. Making turns in helicopters nearly always involves looking through the overhead windows on the opposite side of the aircraft to see and avoid traffic and obstacles. That glimpse of another aircraft through the overhead window just might save you from a mid-air collision while operating in a high traffic area.

Last year several instances were reported involving restricted visibility affecting the pilot's ability to ensure separation from other aircraft. The picture below shows an actual instance where the sunshade

was cut out around the temperature gauge for a temporary or semi-permanent installation.

Removing sun shades during pre-flight is a standard operating procedure found in most pilot operating handbooks.

It is important to remove and securely store all of the covers, tie-downs and locking devices used in the aircraft.



Actual image of a sunshade installed in overhead window. Notice the cutout for the outside temperature gauge as this was a semi-permanent installation. The sunshade label includes the remove before flight warning.

Windows and windscreens are part of the type design and need to be clear, clean and free of any damage or obstruction.

Every year, a SAFECOM is submitted describing a loose sunshade departing the aircraft. Last year was no exception. In [SAFECOM 24-0781](#), a sunshade that was used in the overhead or greenhouse window flew out of aircraft. Fortunately, the sunshade didn't impact the tail rotor and no other aircraft was hit by the sunshade.

We understand that it gets hot, but keeping the sunshades in an overhead window restrict's your visibility and impacts fight safety. Stay hydrated, take a break when you are too hot, and stow those sunshades!

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