



GROUP 6
CALIFORNIA WING - CIVIL AIR PATROL

Aircrew Safety Briefing

"Cockpit Management 101"

(Editor's note: This month's Aircrew Safety Briefing is excerpted from "Cockpit Management 101" by Robert M. Jenney, published in Cockpit Concepts, <http://aviation.org>, operated by Aviation Safety Connection, Inc.)

Cockpit management is the skillful use of resources and the control of activities to safely accomplish a flight's mission. Control is the evaluation of progress and correcting towards a predetermined objective. To do so requires planning and taking action to reach a desired outcome. Cockpit Management elements include:

Pilot Judgment -- Management control is the concept that is fundamental to the pilot-manager. Control -- setting an objective and systematically making corrections that are necessary to meet that objective -- is the essential determinant to mission success.

A lack of cockpit management control can be found in nearly every accident or incident report. The common mistakes are:

- We fail to define in specific terms our immediate objectives.
- We react hastily to developing situations instead of responding in a measured, disciplined manner.

Decision making in the cockpit is a closed-loop control process wherein information feedback is actively sought and verified, and corrective actions are taken to keep the flight parameters within pre-established tolerances. Decision making's precursor, judgment, is the process of evaluating options and making choices. There are practical aspects of judgment that pilots would do well to keep in mind.

Judgment -- "The capacity to assess situations and, by distinguishing and evaluating, draw sound conclusions." That is, options are evaluated, a choice is made, and the decision making process begins. Interestingly, there are two types of judgment, and it can be important to distinguish between them.

- “Perceptive judgment” is intuitive by nature and is the nearly immediate process of coming to a decision based on experience, sensations, perceptions and personal standards. The vast majority of all decisions result from this intuitive process since, otherwise, we would be paralyzed by having to deliberate and think through each situation that presents itself.
- “Cognitive judgment,” on the other hand, is far more deliberate and is the process of coming to a decision based on conscious evaluation and reasoning.

Regardless whether judgment is intuitive or reasoned, the result is a decision, and that decision may be to do nothing or to initiate a plan of action. From a practical point of view, it is usually wise to elevate the flight’s more crucial decisions to the scrutiny of conscious thought and reasoning rather than react instinctively to changes as they occur.

Decision making is task oriented and tactical in nature whereas judgment is more strategic.

(Note to all Group 6 personnel: Neither the Aircrew Briefing nor the 60-Second Safety Advisor are meant to be top-down only. Comments, criticisms, suggestions and contributions are welcome and may be incorporated into future issues. Send comments to cbagdikian@suddenlink.net.)



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