



Civil Air Patrol – USAF Auxiliary

La Crosse Composite Squadron **HEALTH & SAFETY NEWS**

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CAP PRACTICES “IMSAFE”

IMSAFE is the Aeronautical Information Manual's recommended mnemonic for aircraft pilots, including CAP pilots, to use to assess their fitness to fly.

ILLNESS

Is the pilot suffering from any illness or symptom of an illness which might affect them in flight?

Even a minor illness suffered in day-to-day living can seriously degrade performance of many piloting tasks vital to safe flight. The safest rule is not to fly while suffering from any illness.

MEDICATION

Is the pilot currently taking any drugs (prescription or over-the-counter)?

Pilot performance can be seriously degraded by both prescribed and over-the-counter medications, as well as by the medical conditions for which they are taken. The Federal Aviation Regulations prohibit pilots from performing crewmember duties while using any medication that affects the faculties in any way contrary to safety.

STRESS

Is the pilot overly worried about other factors in his life?

The psychological pressures of everyday living can be a powerful distraction and consequently affect a pilot's performance. Stress from everyday living can impair pilot performance, often in very subtle ways. Stress and fatigue (lack of adequate rest) can be an extremely hazardous combination.

ALCOHOL

Has the pilot consumed alcohol?

Although legal limits vary by jurisdiction (0.04 BAC, any consumption in the past 8 hours or current impairment in the USA), the pilot should consider their alcohol consumption within the last 8 to 24 hours. Extensive research has provided a number of facts about hazards of alcohol consumption and flying. As little as one ounce of liquor, one bottle of beer, or four ounces of wine can impair flying skills.

FATIGUE

Has the pilot had sufficient sleep and adequate nutrition?

Fatigue and lack of adequate sleep continue to be some of the most treacherous hazards to flight safety, as it may not be apparent to a pilot until serious errors are made.

EMOTION

Has the pilot fully recovered from any extremely upsetting events such as the loss of a family member?

The emotions of anger, depression, and anxiety may lead to taking risks that border on self-destruction.

Maj. Linda L. Zimmerman, CAP
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STAYING HEALTHY DURING AIR TRAVEL

Airports and airplanes are breeding grounds for germs. Many germs can survive for days or a week on environmental surfaces. Passengers in crowded airports and aboard the aircraft can be exposed to the flu, colds and other viral or bacterial illnesses. So how do you stay safe? We can break this situation down to safety BEFORE boarding the aircraft and safety WHILE on board.

Pre-Boarding Precautions

1. Try to be healthy before the flight- get plenty of rest and eat well.
2. Avoid alcohol and caffeinated drinks before flying.
3. Stay away from people who are sneezing, coughing, or look ill.
4. Minimize the use of public bathrooms. If you need to use one, avoid touching any surface — use paper towels to flush or use the sink faucets, and thorough hand washing afterwards.
5. Use antibacterial hand cleaner frequently while in public areas.

After Boarding the Aircraft

Recirculated air at 30,000 to 40,000 feet is very dry at low humidity levels. This can dry out nasal passageways and increase the chance that a bacterial or viral pathogen can begin growing in your nose. Much of the air is recirculated during the flight, and aircraft air filters may not do a perfect job of catching the bugs before you breathe them.

Onboard Precautions

1. The three most contaminated surfaces are the tray table, the air vent above each seat, and the cabin bathroom. Open the air vent above your seat, but handle it with a paper towel. When you touch any surface such as lavatory doors, sinks, or overhead bins, use a paper towel or your sleeve.
2. Bring your own blanket and pillow. The ones provided by the airline are re-used all day.
3. Hydrate often, but avoid aircraft tap water or ice cubes. Bring your own bottled water.
4. Avoid aisle seats, passengers who may be sick move around the cabin during the flight.
5. Make sure any meal you eat on the aircraft is a hot one. Better yet, bring your own food and snacks.
6. Ask to be re-seated if you are sitting next to someone who is ill.
7. Use antibacterial wipes or gel frequently after touching anything.
8. Wear an N95 or N98 mask while in the airplane.
9. Avoid touching any part of your face-eyes, nose or mouth until you have thoroughly washed your hands.
10. To avoid DVTs in the lower leg, (if you are prone to deep vein thromboses) move about the cabin from time to time to allow blood flow in the legs to increase. Don't place items in the seat-back pocket which is one of the places that germs like to hide.

Staying healthy while traveling may require taking precautions to avoid picking up a bug, but it's nice to be able to enjoy time away from home and be healthy rather than sick.

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