

Avoid the Dirty Dozen

Avoid These Common Causes of Mistakes in the Aviation Workplace



Federal Aviation Administration FAA

Safety is no accident – it must be planned

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Source and ©: FAA

“Safety is no accident” and the “Dirty Dozen” - pithy words from FAA. That sounds a bit unusual but when it comes to flight safety sometimes you cannot beat about the bush. The "dirty dozen" are 12 common causes of human factors errors which according to the FAA represent a potential risk for safety. When looking at them, one can quickly see that, firstly, they may affect everyone involved, and secondly, they are not only relevant for safety risks in aviation but also for occupational safety in professional life.

Safety does not just happen but it is the result of careful work, good planning and a consistent risk management. People make mistakes, are sometimes frightened or are simply not in the same shape every day. As a result, things creep into work processes that can endanger your own safety and that of others. Aviation (including general aviation) is an industry in which safety is much more important than in some other industries. Similar to mining or the offshore industry, errors and safety risks in aviation may immediately result with fatal consequences with many people affected.

As part of risk minimization, safety-endangering human factors must consistently be reduced in day-to-day work. One focus is training people's behavior and working methods that way that safety gets both, consciously and unconsciously an integral part of people's actions at all times. Therefore, it fully makes sense to bring these factors back to attention and to derive measures for oneself and the own working area from them. These 12 factors and simple recommendations for improvement provided by FAA are:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of Communication
Improve your communication 2. Complacency
Avoid the tendency to see what you expect to see 3. Lack of Knowledge
Don't guess, know 4. Distractions
Get back in the groove after a distraction 5. Lack of Teamwork
Build solid teamwork 6. Fatigue
Eliminate fatigue related performance issues | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Lack of Resources
Improve supply and support 8. Pressure
Reduce the burden of physical or mental distress 9. Lack of Assertiveness
Express your feelings, opinions, beliefs, and needs in a positive, productive manner 10. Stress
Manage stress before it affects your work 11. Lack of Awareness
See the whole picture 12. Norms
Help maintain a positive environment with your good attitude and work habits |
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At a first glance, this might be read and interpreted very quickly as a “shallow US level” as this happens in European companies again and again. However, this would be a bit too short-sighted and would not do the matter justice. This is not about creating profound new facts but it's about that everyone is becoming aware of these points and being offered simple suggestions for improving the relevant problem factors. By that everyone can make the best of it for themselves and their situations. **For example, item no. 12** is an inspiration for everyone **to quickly and immediately contribute to health protection at work by consequently implementing the local applicable rules for Covid 19 infection protection.** These 12 factors may potentially look obvious and simple. In many situations in practice, however, these points are neither taken into account nor implemented despite this often would easily be feasible with simple means. Those people, however, who do know these points and incorporated them into their conscious and unconscious thinking will not only get a better subjective feeling of safety after a certain time, but they will also find themselves more often in situations in which they clearly had been able to avoid potential hazards just because they had considered these 12 items.