



# Department of the Interior Accident Prevention Bulletin

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**Subject: Budget Reductions and Flight Safety**

**Area of Concern: Flight Operations**

**Distribution: All Aviation Users**

All agencies within the Federal Government will be affected by the federal budget reductions often referred to as “sequestration”. While the wide ranging impact of sequestration is still being determined, projected funding reductions may possess unintended consequences. That being said, sequestration poses several significant risks:

1. Possible cuts to training, proficiency, and maintenance budgets.
2. Additional stress on DOI personnel (at work and at home) dealing with the uncertainty of furloughs and associated implications.
3. Potential reductions in oversight (both within and external to DOI) as a result of any furloughs.

Increased vigilance will be required of all of us as no mission is worth risking your life or those whom you work with.

*Here are some basic strategies:*

**Maintenance.** 1. Perform a risk assessment. 2. Determine the associated risks. 3. Develop mitigations. 4. Ensure those mitigations are working. 5. Repeat. Simply increasing the situational awareness will prove valuable. Some examples include checking that the aircraft is properly carded **before** we fly, questioning the operator if you see maintenance issues that are not corrected or documented properly, and actively participating in the SAFECOM system. If you are ever in doubt about the airworthiness of an aircraft, ask the pilot. If you are not satisfied, **DO NOT USE THE AIRCRAFT** and contact your bureau national aviation manager or OAS through your respective management channels. The consequences are too high to take lightly.

**Training.** Training is a fundamental component that is required to ensure those who engage in aviation activities possess knowledge or skills that enable them to perform their jobs safely and effectively in the extremely unforgiving aviation environment. Contact OAS Training (208) 433-5090 for alternative solutions to meet requirements.

**Personnel.** The Human Factors risk is tremendous. Trying to maintain a professional focus while flying or performing administrative duties is difficult when you and your family’s livelihood is at risk. Monitor each other and help ensure that we foster an environment that is conducive to an unrestricted flow of communication. Managers require timely, relative, and accurate information in order to make appropriate decisions now more than ever - this process starts with everyone.

As these economic challenges become more pronounced, it is imperative that users and managers be proactive in determining where new risks will appear and which remaining risks may intensify. Armed with this knowledge, you and your respective bureau will be better able to mitigate risks to an acceptable level and accomplish your mission in a safe manner.

*/s/ Keith C. Raley*

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