



by Matt Johnson

Scattered throughout our industry are many great safety-related resources, but whether you're aware of them may depend on your experience level.

Those who have spent at least a few years flying in their "career" position are likely to be familiar with the wide variety of initiatives and tools available, but those who are only starting out in their aviation lives may never have heard of many of them. For reasons I cannot fathom, many of these great resources are only introduced after a pilot has hit his or her stride in their career role, whether it is in helicopter emergency medical services (HEMS), airborne law enforcement, or another side of the industry. This has to change.

Any HEMS pilot will be familiar with a risk assessment tool — regulations now require their use. A risk assessment tool is a reminder that every flight has some level of risk associated with it, and it can sometimes open one's eyes to previously unforeseen dangers. When utilized correctly, it can be a tremendous asset. So, why are we waiting until a pilot reaches that first HEMS job at 2,000 or more hours to introduce them to this tool? Why wait until that 2,000-hour mark to make them more safe or professional?

A great deal of time is spent teaching a new primary flight student the mechanics of flight, while precious little on the many important facets of decision-making that make a pilot safe. Any certified flight instructor (CFI) will remember studying the "laws of learning,"

# Why Wait?

which include the law of primacy — that things learned initially tend to stick with a student throughout his or her flying career. Instead of waiting for 2,000 hours to pass, why not teach the importance of the risk management process (and the risk assessment tool) from the very beginning? And I do mean from the *very first flight*; the new student watches the CFI conduct a pre-flight risk assessment and learns what he or she is doing and, more importantly, *why* they are doing it. I have heard of just a couple of flight schools utilizing risk assessment tools with students for flight training, and I strongly applaud them. Hopefully, others will follow suit.

But this is just one of many amazing resources that could be presented to students. The United States Helicopter Safety Team (USHST) does an amazing job at conducting and providing analysis of helicopter accidents so important lessons can be learned from mistakes. This group has produced dozens of great training bulletins and fact sheets. They should be mandatory reading for any

came up with the idea of the Enroute Decision Point (EDP) — which Bill Winn has spoken about extensively in his regular column in *Vertical 911*. It's a great concept, so I have to ask again: Why wait? Why, as an industry, are we waiting until a pilot reaches a HEMS position before we teach them such life-saving techniques? Don't wait — start now! IIMC-related accidents and incidents are not just limited to HEMS operations, so these techniques should be used across the industry.

Finally, Matt Zuccaro and the other fine folks at Helicopter Association International (HAI) have developed the "Land & Live" program. This concept stresses the importance that a pilot should land the helicopter *before* the situation becomes an emergency, such as in the case of a chip light, low fuel, or weather situation. The program strongly emphasizes a non-punitive culture within commercial operations, so that pilots can use good judgment and make the decision to land and live without fear of negative repercussions.

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new student, but sadly I find that many new pilots have no idea what the USHST is. Why wait to introduce this organization? As a CFI, take the time to introduce the USHST to all of your students. The group's website provides mounds of good, useful reading material.

Unfortunately, accidents in the air medical industry have happened on a near regular basis in the United States, with inadvertent entry into instrument meteorological conditions (IIMC) a common factor. Many in the industry have taken note and developed various mitigation strategies, including an absolutely ingenious concept developed by the National EMS Pilots Association (NEMSPA). This group of highly talented professionals

This concept may sound like common sense to many, but all too often we read of situations where the outcome could have been entirely different had a pilot used this simple concept. So, why wait? Why not introduce this philosophy very early on in a student's training?

These are just a sample of the various philosophies and techniques that are being used by the higher-time "professional" pilots in our industry. As an industry, we need to start teaching these and other great safety practices to the student pilot as soon as possible in their training. It may one day save their life.

