



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

VAI Encourages Pilots to “Take the Pause” for General Aviation Safety

Safety initiative highlights tools for avoiding common causes of rotorcraft accidents.

Alexandria, VA, USA (Apr. 1, 2025) – Vertical Aviation International (VAI) is calling on rotorcraft pilots across the globe to join the “Pause for General Aviation (GA) Safety” initiative by exploring the dedicated Vertical Aviation track at gasafe.org, a website developed in collaboration with the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA).

While several of the resources on the initiative’s website reference US-based standards, VAI acknowledges that aviation hazards are global and remain a constant concern when crossing international borders. Thus, aviation professionals and enthusiasts of all types can find something of value.

“Despite notable progress in spreading safety awareness across our industry, preventable tragedies still occur—often for reasons we’ve identified for decades,” says Chris Hill, senior director for safety for VAI and a former US Army and US Coast Guard helicopter pilot. “Aviation remains one of the safest modes of transportation, but public confidence is at risk if we don’t remain vigilant. Emerging technologies offer great promise, but they’re no substitute for professionalism and sound aeronautical decision-making.”

According to industry data, three types of events continue to drive most fatal rotorcraft accidents:

- **Loss of Control:** Whether due to vortex ring state, low-G conditions, or exceeding aircraft limitations, these scenarios leave little margin for recovery
- **Unintended Flight into Instrument Meteorological Conditions (UIMC):** Helicopter pilots flying in these conditions, sometimes referred to as “IIMC,” have on average 56 seconds to impact
- **Striking Objects at Low Altitude:** Helicopter operations frequently require low-level flight, but this environment is also rife with unforgiving hazards such as wires, towers, and terrain.

To manage these hazards, VAI emphasizes the importance of identifying risk and actively choosing safer alternatives.

“Real change doesn’t happen in safety meetings or on social media,” Hill adds. “It happens in the cockpit and the hangar, during preflight, and in every decision we make.”

Vertical Aviation International

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The “Pause for GA Safety” is a call to action for ALL pilots to:

1. **Choose a Resource:** Visit the vertical aviation section of the [Pause for GA Safety](#) website to access curated safety materials. Additionally, many more materials are available on VAI’s website at: <https://verticalavi.org/safety>.
2. **Review and Reflect:** Engage with tools relevant to how and where you fly that can enhance your decision-making and risk awareness.
3. **Share the Message:** Encourage your fellow aviators to promote a culture of safety by taking part in the Pause for GA Safety.

“Thank you for investing your time to make vertical aviation safer for everyone,” Hill says.

For more information, visit: [Pause for GA Safety](#).

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Vertical Aviation International (VAI), formerly Helicopter Association International (HAI), is the world’s leading membership association dedicated to the vertical aviation industry, which encompasses all aircraft capable of vertical or short takeoff and landing. Throughout its 76 years of fueling industry growth through connection, advocacy, safety, education, and support for its members’ success, VAI has leveraged the power of vertical flight to strengthen communities worldwide. The association welcomes all facets of the vertical aviation industry, including manufacturers, operators, suppliers and vendors, pilots and maintenance technicians, and other aviation professionals. For more information about VAI, please visit: <https://verticalavi.org/>

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