



DEBRIEFING

Flight Safety is Everybody's Business

Situational Awareness – What don't you know?

The saying is “You don't know what you don't know”. Our knowledge is limited to what we have learned over time (and remembered) and what our senses take-in on a moment-by-moment basis. For example, most of us were warned that if hit by a car we would be seriously injured. But, if you are jogging with your iPod on and don't hear the car coming, that knowledge, that warning doesn't help as you cross in front of the car. In the aviation world we would attribute a cause factor of degraded situational awareness. The DFS occurrence database offers more than a couple of examples of degraded situational awareness – below is a rather dramatic example.

A POLITICAL STATEMENT?

Occurrence Description: JET BLAST – While parked at the Canada Reception Centre to deplane the Prime Minister and other passengers, a regional jet parked on the uncontrolled apron conducted a high power engine run to effect a cross bleed start. The ensuing jet blast pelted the motorcade, RCMP, and some passengers with high velocity gravel and snow grains.

Investigation: Upon further investigation and discussion with Ottawa Airport Operations it was found that engine run-ups are not permitted without the Airport Duty Manager's permission. Once the area is deemed clear, approval at the discretion of the Manager will be granted. Further, once approval for the engine run-up has been granted, ground crews and aircrew are to



ensure the jet blast area remains clear. However, at the time, Airport Operations policy did not stipulate that cross bleed starts constitute an engine run-up. In this case, permission was sought from the aircrew for a cross bleed start, with the intent, from the crew's perspective, of an engine run-up. However, with no mention of an engine run-up to conduct the cross bleed start, ATC advised the crew that ramp activities were to be conducted at "pilot's discretion." The high power run-up was then conducted at the crew's discretion without adequately clearing the jet blast area behind the aircraft. This, resulted in gravel and ice been blown towards personnel disembarking the *Challenger* aircraft behind the starting regional jet

Cause Factors: UNKNOWN FLIGHT. CREW - Error: Attention or Memory: Loss of Situational Awareness - In that the aircrew commencing with the cross bleed start did not perceive that an aircraft was behind them, thus leading to a lack of comprehension with regards to the implications of the action. Preconditions could not be assigned because aircrew could not be interviewed.

MAINTENANCE/OTHER - *Error: Attention or Memory: Loss of Situational Awareness* - In that the ground crew did not perceive that the *Challenger* aircraft behind the starting aircraft would be subject to jet blast, thus leading to a lack of comprehension with regards to the implications of the action. Preconditions could not be assigned because ground crew could not be interviewed.

MANAGEMENT/OTHER - *Organizational Influences: Organizational Process* - In that Airport Operations' policy was not clear with regards to engine run-ups and cross bleed starts on the ramp.

Preventative Measures: Airport Operations has clarified for ATC that the same precautions necessary for engine run-ups apply to cross bleed starts. In addition, Operations has briefed all civil carriers utilizing the airport of the precautions both air and ground crew must take

while conducting cross bleed starts. Further, 412 Squadron crews dispatched to the Canada Reception Centre will park their aircraft on Spot 50 which is adjacent the north side of the building at the northwest corner. This will ensure adequate separation from other aircraft utilizing the main ramp and protect passengers from jet blast.

Parting Note: For those keeping up with Canadian political events you are aware that we have just had a federal election. The Prime Minister at the time of this occurrence, the one who endured the jet blast, no longer has to worry about such things. I caution the new Prime Minister to keep his head up as you never can be sure where your next critic will make his/her views known. As for the rest of you, I urge you to be aware of your surroundings and to think about the impact of your actions.

Be Smart – Be Safe.

