

The Extraordinary Negative Impact of General Aviation on our Communities Part 4. Safety

The Air Safety Institute section of the Airplane Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) released the 27th edition of the Joseph T. Nall report in October of 2019. This report features the data on accidents in general aviation that occurred in 2015. The AOPA likes to hang their hats on this report, as they believe that it is an indication of how safe it is to fly general aviation aircraft. Since 1975, the number of certified GA pilots has decreased by over 25% and most general aviation pilots are in the 50 – 70 year old bracket. Why do you need a Nall report to tell you that the numbers of fatal accidents will continue to decrease in number? Give or take a couple of years, the number of fatal accidents has steadily decreased in number for 44 years. With so many pilots having lost their lives in plane crashes, the pool is obviously decreasing.

The report **IS** a testament on how safe the aircraft is considering the volume of hours that they spend in the air.

It **IS** also a testament on how many different ways pilots can find to crash perfectly good airplanes.

The report **IS NOT** a testament on general aviation safety.

Once you put the human element into the cockpit, the odds change. Mistakes made in the air are far more dangerous than those made on the ground.

Though general aviation (GA) wants to be grouped with commercial aviation when it comes to safety, their record is appalling. This is why they're number 3 on the 10 most dangerous jobs list.

Most pilots do not know the number of fatal accidents each year associated with these planes. The report clearly shows that the accidents are 75% due to pilot error. Shouldn't their passengers know how often they occur? Would they want to fly with them if they did? In the last 10 years there have been 2,437 pilots killed in general aviation accidents. That is an extremely conservative number as 4,123 total people died in those fatal accidents. It is likely that many of the passengers were pilots. Since 1975, there have been 17,856 GA pilots killed in as many separate fatal accidents. This is another very conservative number. And the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) brags about the decrease in fatal accidents. Sorry, I forgot to mention that they are getting better.

If commercial aircraft had an average of 247 fatal accidents per year, would people fly any less? Ya think???