



OUR VISION: A Civil Helicopter Community with Zero Fatal Accidents

HELICOPTER SAFETY NEWS

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56 Seconds to Live U.S. Helicopter Safety Team Releases Video Aimed at Saving Lives

[\(https://ushst.org/56secs/\)](https://ushst.org/56secs/)

WASHINGTON DC – Can you imagine yourself in a situation where you only had 56 seconds to live? If you are a helicopter pilot and you find yourself in Unintentional Instrument Meteorological Conditions (UIMC), those precious 56 seconds may be a reality.

“U.S. accident statistics reveal that a helicopter pilot operating under Visual Flight Rules who unintentionally continues flight into IMC will very likely lose control of their aircraft and be dead within an average of 56 seconds,” according to Nick Mayhew, industry co-chair of the U.S. Helicopter Safety Team. “We must join industry stakeholders to do everything we can to reverse this alarming and unacceptable trend.”

The USHST has created a video (found at <https://ushst.org/56secs/>) aimed at saving lives and making sure that those 56 seconds never occur. Watch the video to see just how rapidly a pilot can lose control of their helicopter when attempting to continue a Visual Flight Rules flight into IMC.

The 56-second time period is based on a USHST study of 221 fatal helicopter accidents that occurred from 2009 to 2019. Unintentional IMC was one of the top causes in 38 of the fatal accidents. Analysis of these events determined that the median estimated time from UIMC entry to the fatal crash was 56 seconds. The video offers a graphic depiction of how those 56 seconds feel to a desperate helicopter pilot.

More information about the USHST, the International Helicopter Safety Foundation, its reports, safety tools, Reel Safety audio-visual presentations, and YouTube safety videos can be obtained at www.USHST.org, at www.IHSF.aero and on the USHST and IHSF Facebook pages.

In addition, coming soon is the “56 Seconds to Live Course.” On April 15 on the USHST web site, pilots will be able to complete a free learning management system (LMS) course that emphasizes critical aeronautical decision-making moments. The course will include a learning certificate and enable pilots with a FAASite account to earn credit.