

IIMC TOOLKIT

BEAT THOSE 56-SECOND ODDS

“A helicopter pilot who unintentionally continues VFR flight into IMC will very likely lose control of their aircraft and be dead within an average of 56 seconds.”

—Nick Mayhew, industry co-chair,
US Helicopter Safety Team



1 IIMC AVOIDANCE: BEFORE TAKEOFF

Take a few minutes on the ground to avoid a later IIMC encounter

- ⚠️ **Use a flight risk assessment tool (FRAT)** to assess and mitigate mission risks
- ⚠️ **Create enroute decision points (EDP)** by selecting a minimum acceptable altitude or airspeed for the flight
 - ✔️ When I go below either of those minimums, I must change my flight plan

⚠️ Plan your route

- ✔️ How will en route weather conditions impact the safety of my flight?
- ✔️ How will terrain/obstacles along the route affect my flight plan?
- ✔️ What conditions will require me to change my flight plan?
- ✔️ If I do end up in the clouds, what's my plan for recovery?

⚠️ If conditions aren't GO for VFR flight

- ✔️ I say, "Let's delay" OR
- ✔️ I file and fly IFR

2 IIMC AVOIDANCE: IN THE AIR

Be alert for and respond to changing weather conditions during flight

- ⚠️ **When you go below your EDP** (minimum altitude OR airspeed), do ONE of the following:
 - ✔️ I turn around OR
 - ✔️ I divert to better weather OR
 - ✔️ I Land & LIVE OR
 - ✔️ I pick up an IFR clearance (if trained and equipped)

- ⚠️ **Respond decisively BEFORE** losing visual references

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[USHST.ORG/56SECS](https://ushst.org/56secs)



3 IIMC RECOVERY: IN THE AIR

Surviving an IIMC encounter requires prompt recognition and action

- ⚠️ **You're in IMC** if ONE of these conditions is true:
 - ✔️ I lack proper visibility OR
 - ✔️ I don't have visual reference to the horizon OR
 - ✔️ I can't control the aircraft visually
- ⚠️ **To survive an IIMC encounter,** you must:
 - ✔️ Admit that I'm in IMC
 - ✔️ Commit to instruments
 - ✔️ Maintain aircraft control
 - ✔️ Keep my composure
 - ✔️ Follow my recovery plan
 - ✔️ Notify ATC

4 IIMC AVOIDANCE AND RECOVERY: TRAINING

IIMC avoidance and recovery are lifesaving, essential skills for pilots

- ⚠️ **Train to stay current, competent, and confident in your IIMC skills.**



I train regularly to keep skills fresh



I train in all aspects of IIMC prevention, beginning with the decision to fly



I train for IMC recognition and instrument transition, as well as instrument flight



I use scenario-based training that reflects my typical missions, environment, and weather



I use simulators, aviation training devices, and desktop flight programs to experience safely the result of poor decision-making and delay in IMC recognition