

Jun '09 Safety Newsletter

Dear fellow aviators,

Welcome to the June Safety Newsletter. At the risk of swamping you with safety matters here is the June issue, which contains important and urgent information.

As you all know we have moved into the new flight ops center at Shek Kong. While the outside is still a bit like a construction site I think we would all agree that the interior of the building is impressive. A vast improvement on what we had in the old building.

I have been flying in Shek Kong during these last two days and have observed some teething problems related to our new location. The purpose of this newsletter is to warn everybody of the new threats presented so that hopefully we can avoid any ground incidents.

The parking and taxi facilities are not complete and we must all be extremely vigilant at this stage to avoid any incidents.

The current status of the facilities and the hazards present are as follows:

1. The new taxiways and aircraft parking spots do not have any centerline or stop line markings.

Ensure you taxi in the center of the concrete taxiway. Do not push the aircraft too far back when parking. The wall is very close and rudder damage can occur.

Check wingtip clearance from other aircraft, the fuel bowser and gateposts.

If you run onto the adjacent dirt by mistake consider to shut down the engine and hand maneuver the aircraft back onto the taxiway. Do not use high engine power over loose stones because prop damage will occur.

The eastern most parking bay is only large enough for the C.152 due to the close proximity of the adjacent wall. It is presently labelled "PA ONLY". This sign needs to be changed to "C.152 ONLY".

2. The western exit from the new parking area "X" is blocked at present. The new gate is broken.

With only one entry/exit point we must think ahead to avoid the situation of two aircraft head-on with nowhere to go. Ensure your way is clear before taxiing into or out of area "X".

As you taxi into area "X" if an aircraft is about to taxi from its parking spot (engine running) taxi to the western end of the parking area before shutting down to allow the aircraft a clear exit.

3. The entry/exit from area "X" crosses an active road, which is frequently used by the PLA and club members. At present there are no warning signs for either road or aircraft traffic. The PLA do not appear to be giving way to aircraft crossing the road.

Have a good lookout before crossing this road. Give way to road traffic unless they are obviously giving way to you.

4. The eastern exit from the new parking area has a blind spot to the right. The view of the road is blocked making it difficult to see road traffic.

Be extremely vigilant when exiting the parking area from this point.

5. The exits from the parking area lead directly onto the runway. There is no warning sign at present of an active runway ahead.

Do not leave the taxiway onto the runway until you are certain there is no traffic to affect you.

Check the wind direction and select the most appropriate runway for use (subject to traffic). With our new location runway 29 is proving to be more efficient from an operational point of view.

If you are the only aircraft operating it is YOUR decision as the pilot on which runway to use, not flight ops. So, be very aware of the wind conditions.

6. The fuel bowser is now being brought to the aircraft for refueling.

Beware of this additional and mobile hazard in the parking area.

7. The entry/exit gates from the parking area are exactly the same size as the ones into "W" area.

Wingtip clearance is limited especially with the Slingsby. Use extreme caution.

The same restrictions apply as to taxiing into and out of "W" area? Student pilots on solo flights must shutdown before the gate.

It is early days and there are bound to be teething problems with our new home. Lets all be "aware of the hazards" and be especially vigilant at this time so we can avoid any ground incidents.

Happy and safe flying

Bob