

Traffic Mix: Fixed vs Rotary

An air taxi flight crew had a close encounter with an EMS helicopter at a non-Towered field when the Captain succumbed to hurry-up urges.

■ *My Captain was in a hurry to get home. He had plans and we were running late due to weather. I was picking up weather and receiving our clearance to depart while he was taxiing the aircraft. I was heads down for most of the taxi, setting up equipment and writing down clearances. It was a short taxi from the FBO. The Captain taxied into the hold short position of runway. I received a clearance void time and I switched the radio to the local CTAF. Before I could make a radio call or run the Taxi check and Before Takeoff check, he increased power to taxi into position for takeoff. A medical helicopter was on short final right above the threshold. The helicopter pilot immediately made a position report and the Captain slammed on the brakes. It was a very close call. One that could have been avoided by not rushing. Not allowing another pilot to rush you and sacrifice safety.*

Both pilots should be heads up while taxiing. Both pilots should verify that final is clear. And checklists should always be completed regardless of how late you're running... Being late is better than not arriving at all.



In another see-and-avoid incident, a helicopter pilot failed to heed UNICOM announcements and maintain situational awareness.

■ *After announcing my intention to take off on Runway 5 on the UNICOM for a departure to the southwest, I entered Runway 5 and began my takeoff roll. After reaching about 40 knots (55 knots rotate speed), a helicopter entered the runway about halfway down the runway for his departure. He entered the active runway by 'air taxi' without hesitation and only announced his takeoff intentions on the UNICOM as he was entering the runway and was already over the runway before he finished his radio transmission. In order to avoid a collision, I pulled power to idle and braked, aborting my takeoff and proceeded to taxi back for a new takeoff attempt.*

Had the helicopter pilot paid more attention to the radio announcements on the UNICOM and looked down the runway, he would have had a better situational awareness of the airport and the fact that there was an aircraft already attempting to take off on the active. Also, had he hesitated after his transmission before air taxiing onto the runway, I would have had the chance to inform him as to my position before he proceeded further.

Use the Correct CTAF

A Piper Pawnee had just finished towing a glider and was returning to the field to land to the north, when a high-performance Mitsubishi turboprop landed south on the same runway.

■ *The PA-25 had just completed a tow and was circling in for a landing on Runway 34 and was making radio calls. The PA-25 was on final about 50 feet off the deck when an MU-2 landed Runway*

16 with no radio calls and without flying a pattern. The calm wind runway is Runway 34. The PA-25 did take evasive action to avoid coming nose-to-nose with the MU-2. After talking with the MU-2 pilot he advised that he was not aware of the frequency change that took place a year ago even though he flies in weekly. Neither his charts, nor AFD [Airport Facility Directory] were current.

A corporate flight crew failed to see an important NOTAM for an unfamiliar non-Towered field.

■ *We had been cleared for a visual approach to [non-Tower] field. We tried to call on UNICOM, but got no reply. Due to the proximity to a military airport, we elected to land with a slight tailwind. As we approached short final, we saw a light plane take off in the opposite direction. We did not require evasive action as he turned out from our path. Once on the ground, we found the change was in the NOTAMs, but was buried in many others, so we missed it. The lesson is to be far more careful with NOTAMs when going into an unfamiliar and uncontrolled field.*

A certificated pilot riding as a passenger in a Cessna 206 was helping the pilot work the radios while taxiing out for takeoff. Unfortunately, preoccupation with programming a GPS led to an incident.

■ *I was departing in a C206 and had the wrong frequency dialed for CTAF. I was the pilot not flying but was working the radios. Our back-taxi down Runway 20 caused a Cessna on short final to have to do a go-around. My inexperience with the GPS avionics in the 206 was what I attribute my error to. The pilot flying the aircraft on short approach was very angry, as was I at myself. I should have double-checked the frequency on the taxi-out but was distracted with inputting the flight plan in the GPS.*

ASRS Conducting Wake Vortex Encounter Study

In conjunction with the FAA, NASA's Aviation Safety Reporting System (ASRS) is interested in wake encounters, both enroute and in the terminal area within the United States. Some of the factors to be analyzed will include magnitude of wake encounter, aircraft spacing, aircraft type, runway configuration, and consequences from the encounter. This effort began in March 2007 and will be continuing in 2010.

ASRS contacts pilots who report wake vortex encounters to ASRS to request their voluntary participation in completing a web-based supplemental question set. All identifying information (names, company affiliations, flight numbers, etc.) will be removed in the ASRS summary research data.

To support efforts to fully understand wake encounter events, ASRS strongly encourages pilots who experience a wake vortex encounter to report these incidents to ASRS and to participate in the ASRS Wake Vortex Encounter Study.