



PIRATE FLYER

Sally Ride | Back In the Saddle | NIFA Flight Team

HU Captain's Culture

THE SAFETY TRAIL

Trust - Safe, Valued, Respect

Report - Proactive, Accessible

Adapt - Flexible, Innovative

Inform - Sharing, Transparent

Learn - Share Safety Intel

Name The First Female Astronaut



Safety Reporting



Back In the Saddle

As summer gives way to fall, changing weather patterns and shorter daylight hours introduce new risks for flight operations. University aviation programs are especially vulnerable because many students and newer CFIs are experiencing these seasonal transitions for the first time or returning from Summer break. This Fall QCQ focuses on two critical areas that deserve proactive attention.

VFR into IMC

Make the Safe Decision Early - Fall brings frontal systems, morning radiation fog, and lowering ceilings that can quickly turn a routine VFR flight into an unsafe situation. Continued VFR flight into IMC remains one of the leading fatal accident categories in general aviation.

Key Risk Factors:

- Rapidly changing fall weather conditions
- Limited weather decision-making experience among newer pilots
- Early-stage students whose personal minimums are still developing
- Low-time CFIs who may not have experienced a complete seasonal weather cycle

Best Practice Controls

- Establish and adhere to personal minimums
- Use a Go / Delay / Reschedule decision framework
- Apply FRAT scoring to identify elevated risk
- Tighten operational limits for student pilots during marginal weather conditions

Shorter Days, More Night Operations

Sunset arrives approximately three minutes earlier each day throughout the fall. Training flights that occurred in daylight during summer may take place at dawn or dusk by October. Daylight Saving Time ends on the first Sunday in November, further accelerating the transition.

Key Risk Factors

- Unexpected exposure to night flying
- Unfamiliar airport lighting environments
- Increased potential for spatial disorientation
- Night currency lapses
- 45 minute (minimum) fuel reserve requirements for night operations

Best Practice Controls

- Schedule all night training flight with Instrument Instructors
- Review airport lighting and lighting-related NOTAMs
- Night operations generate a specific Flight Risk Analysis Tool (FRAT) trigger
- Discuss night-specific risks during preflight planning



Fly Smart this Fall

Seasonal transitions affect university flight programs more than many other aviation operations because student populations and instructional staff change frequently. Risk awareness and risk management training conducted now, before weather and daylight changes fully arrive, builds sound decision-making habits that improve safety throughout the season.

One last tip, ALL schools are back in session, keep an eye out for school zones and slow down, our future aviation professionals are depending on us to Drive Smart!

NOTAM: The 2026 National Intercollegiate Flying Association (NIFA) Air Pirates Flight Team is forming for the Region X competition October 7-10. All programs are welcome, there are both ground and air events, including safety, aircraft ground handling. Let's show folks how to **Fly HU!**

