

## Fly Friendly

### *A Little Effort Goes a Long Way*

My iPhone alarm starts chirping at a painfully early hour on weekdays and, since I don't usually manage to shut down the computer as early as I should each night, I crave every second of shut-eye I can get. So you can imagine how frustrating it is when the last of my pre-alarm slumber is rudely and utterly obliterated by the WHUMP-WHUMP-WHUMP of news and traffic helicopters circling ... and circling ... and circling my neighborhood, which is located near a busy commuter highway. I wouldn't mind if they merely passed over. But I do mind the incredibly annoying, sometimes deafening, and, to my mind, downright rude behavior of aviators who give no thought to the disturbance they are creating for everyone else.

Think about that for a moment. If a bleeds-blue-fuel aviation enthusiast like me can be so annoyed, even angered, by misplaced aircraft noise, imagine how poorly it plays to the non-flying general public. That's one of the reasons we encounter so many negative, even hostile, attitudes toward GA these days. I hope you'll agree that we have enough challenges without creating problems that we can avoid entirely with just a bit of thought. Here are a couple of simple things we can all do.

#### **SHHow Consideration**

Nowadays, many of the airports that GA pilots call home are surrounded by other people's actual homes — lots of them. When I first started flying, my home airport in northern Virginia was bounded on all sides by open fields. No longer. Several housing developments now occupy that once-empty space, and other open areas are gradually filling in. We pilots can huff and puff all we want to about how the airport was here first, and how “those people *knew*” that buying property near an airport would mean tolerating a certain amount of noise. The huffing and puffing might make us feel better, but it's pointless if “those people” complain to elected officials who would happily see the airport closed and consigned to “other economic uses.”

There's a limit to what we can safely do to mitigate noise, but it is incumbent upon all of us to do as much as we can do to reduce the noise impact on our neighbors. If there are residential developments near your airport, it's a good bet that airport man-

agement has, so to speak, “heard” from them and worked out some kind of noise mitigation plan. Such a plan could include non-standard traffic patterns, designation of a calm wind runway that reduces traffic over more congested areas, and other such measures. Take the time to learn what noise mitigation measures exist at the airports you use, and add those measures to your checklist.

Another important way to fly friendly is to avoid prolonged maneuvering over any given area. That silo may be perfect for practicing turns around a point, but the folks in the farmhouse next to it may not consider their neighborhood to be as “uncongested” as it appears to you. That also applies to operating near environmentally sensitive areas (e.g., wildlife preserves) that are marked as such on sectional charts.

#### **Dump the Dumping**

Even before the prospect of EPA fines was a major consideration, it always bugged me to throw fuel on the ramp after sumping the tanks. I was one of the earliest adapters of the GATS jar fuel tester, whose screen allows you to safely pour sampled fuel (minus the water) back into the tank. It may cost more than the traditional fuel testers, but the very modest cost of an environmentally friendly fuel sampler is far less than the cost to the environment — not to mention the cost to your budget if you should incur an EPA fine for fuel dumping.

Another option is to use the fuel collection receptacles that are fast becoming a standard feature on ramps all over the country. If you can't safely return sampled fuel to the tank, step to the nearest fuel collection container and pour it in. And if your airport lacks such containers, take a moment to speak to the FBO or airport management about installing them ASAP.

For more suggestions on flying friendly, check out the “Environmental Issues” section of the Aviator's Model Code of Conduct, available free of charge from [www.secureav.com](http://www.secureav.com). Doing your part to keep the planet green, clean, and quiet is more than a good idea. It's simply the right thing to do!

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