

Circle of Safety Consumer Education Program



The Passenger completes the Circle

When passengers know and understand their rights and responsibilities the aviation safety circle is closed and accidents will be reduced.

Together we can make aviation in Alaska safer!

Alaska is the “Flyingest State in the Union.” Because airplanes are the main method of travel around the state, we tend to minimize the risks of air travel. Alaska averaged 35 commercial aviation accidents per year in the 1990’s; many resulted in fatalities. When a plane crashes and the pilot and/or passengers are killed, real families and real communities suffer the loss.

To reduce or eliminate accidents and the emotional toll they take, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) partnered with Alaskan air service operators and passengers to develop the *Circle of Safety*. Decisions about travel focus on risk, convenience and cost. Safety should be the overriding concern. This multi-faceted, inclusive response recognizes the role air carriers, pilots, passengers and the FAA play in improving the safety culture of aviation in our state.

The FAA sets rules for the operation of aircraft and airports and provides services to the flying public. Every year the agency spends millions of dollars to build new runways, install navigation aids, lighting and other equipment, to train pilots and to enforce regulations.

Air carriers are responsible for the development and implementation of risk management practices, ensuring that aircraft are properly maintained, meeting FAA standards and providing quality service to customers.

Pilots have the responsibility for maintaining their skills, meeting FAA standards and making good decisions prior to and throughout the flight.

Passengers are influential in making flying safer in Alaska! This may be a new idea to aviation consumers who see the pilot as the captain of the ship and the ultimate decision maker. While that is indeed the role of the pilot, research shows that there are many factors which can influence how a pilot operates an aircraft, including pressure from passengers to get them to their destination.

The Circle of Safety is completed by the passengers. Passengers should be willing to ask questions in a polite way if they feel uncomfortable about something or have questions. This idea can be intimidating to most people, but if a passenger is uncomfortable about something there is probably a reason. It is important to act on those feelings and voice any concerns. The pilot may have a simple answer that restores the comfort level of the passenger. On the other hand, asking a question may be all it takes to refocus on safety and avoid a mishap with the flight. It is better to ask questions about a flight and avoid a potential tragedy. This is good “risk management,” in which the passenger has a key role.

For more information about the passengers’ responsibility for safety, human factors and weather, contact the Alaskan FAAS Team toll-free at 1-866-357-4704. Questions are always welcome!