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SAFETYWIRE



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Staying Coherent at the Collective – Two aircraft overshot runways but were saved by an engineered materials arresting system

(Source: Leah Murphy, FAA Safety Team Representative, FAA Safety Briefing Magazine, December 31, 2025)

Fatigue is one of the most dangerous risks in aviation because it hides in plain sight. Although I have always respected the importance of fatigue management, it was not until I began working in the air ambulance industry that I fully recognized my responsibility to ensure I was rested for duty.

Transitioning into night shift flying forced me to reevaluate how I manage my rest. Sleep during the day is unnatural, and it took trial and error to create an environment that allowed me to be truly rested before a long night of flying. I became intentional — blocking out light, reducing distractions, and sometimes saying no to social activities to prioritize the rest that my role demands. It is not just about protecting myself; it is about protecting my crew and the passengers who rely on us to arrive safely. Being proactive about rest is just as important as completing a checklist or reviewing the weather. It is part of my job.

The volunteer-driven [U.S. Helicopter Safety Team \(USHST\)](#) is also being proactive about the risks of fatigue on the flight deck. Its mission is to develop, deliver, and advocate practical safety resources that strengthen safety culture and enhance performance across the rotorcraft community. With the vision of zero fatal civil helicopter accidents, the USHST has developed a series of [helicopter safety enhancements \(H-SEs\)](#). These enhancements target preventable accident causes, such as wire strikes, loss of control, and maintenance errors, by offering operators practical, data-driven strategies to mitigate risk. Each enhancement is designed to address known hazards and strengthen the safety culture across the industry.



Sunset on a rooftop helipad in Cleveland, Ohio. (Photo by Leah Murphy)

Among these initiatives, one of the most pressing is [H-SE 23–04, Fatigue Risk Management](#), which aims to improve fatigue awareness and risk mitigation of scheduling factors leading to fatigue. Fatigue has long been recognized as a silent threat to aviation safety, but it is often underreported and misunderstood. Since 1990, the NTSB has identified fatigue in only 33 helicopter accidents, yet research across industries suggests fatigue is a factor in roughly 20% of all safety incidents. That gap highlights how difficult fatigue is to identify after an accident and how frequently its role may be overlooked.

A recent [USHST white paper](#) (PDF) about fatigue risk management stresses that current practices fall short. Traditionally, helicopter operators have relied on self-assessment, expecting pilots and maintenance personnel to judge, for themselves, whether they are too tired to perform safely. The problem is that fatigue undermines judgment. Sleep-deprived individuals underestimate their deficits, take risks they would otherwise avoid, and may feel pressure to continue a flight even when they know they should stop. Several tragic accidents illustrate this reality: pilots falling asleep at the controls, fatigued search and rescue crews pressing ahead under pressure, and maintenance staff making preventable mistakes after extended shifts.

To combat these risks, USHST calls for operators to implement fatigue risk management programs (FRMPs) as part of their safety management systems (SMS). A strong FRMP includes objective methods for identifying when fatigue poses a hazard and implementing mitigation strategies and tracking mechanisms to measure program effectiveness over time.

While operators must provide the tools, the pilot's responsibility is to make safe decisions. Every pilot has the obligation to decline a flight if they are not fit for duty.

When pilots, maintenance staff, and operators all take fatigue seriously, we can reduce accidents. The USHST's fatigue initiative reminds us that safety does not come from luck or pushing through. It comes from preparation, honesty, and the discipline to say "not today" when fatigue makes flight unsafe.



Leah Murphy is a dual-rated flight instructor and helicopter air ambulance pilot. She is also an FAA Safety Team Representative in Cleveland, Ohio.

This article was originally published in the January/February 2026 issue of FAA Safety Briefing magazine. https://www.faa.gov/safety_briefing



NTSB Warns Of Midair Collision Risk At Burbank Airport – NTSB Chair Homendy flagged Burbank Airport as a potential midair collision hotspot due to heavy mixed traffic.

(Source: Amelia Walsh, Edited By: Matt Ryan, AVweb, January 28, 2026)



National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Chair Jennifer Homendy warned that Hollywood Burbank Airport (BUR) could be at risk for a deadly midair collision if safety concerns raised by airlines are not addressed by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Homendy's remarks came Tuesday following a congressional hearing as part of the NTSB's [investigation](#) into a fatal midair collision near Washington, D.C., last year involving an Army helicopter and an American Airlines regional jet that killed 67 people.

Homendy said commercial airline operators have repeatedly flagged concerns about congestion and mixed traffic in the Burbank airspace but feel their warnings have been ignored by the FAA. The airport handles thousands of [operations](#) each month, including 7,541 commercial flights in December 2025.

"Burbank is one where commercial airlines have called me to say the next midair is going to be at Burbank, and nobody at FAA is paying attention to us," said Homendy. "So, whether it is involving helicopters or not, people are raising red flags, and why aren't people listening? The FAA has to ensure safety. That is their job."

The [LA Times](#) cited data from NASA's Aviation Safety Reporting System noting there have been six reported near midair collisions at Burbank Airport since Jan. 1, 2021.

In response, the FAA said it has already implemented safety improvements at both airports.

The agency said it has been using AI tools since February 2025 to identify high-traffic "hotspots" with mixed helicopter and airplane operations. As part of its efforts, the FAA temporarily lowered the Van Nuys traffic pattern by 200 feet to reduce conflicts with Burbank arrivals. Preliminary results showed fewer TCAS alerts, and the FAA made the change permanent on Jan. 5, 2026.

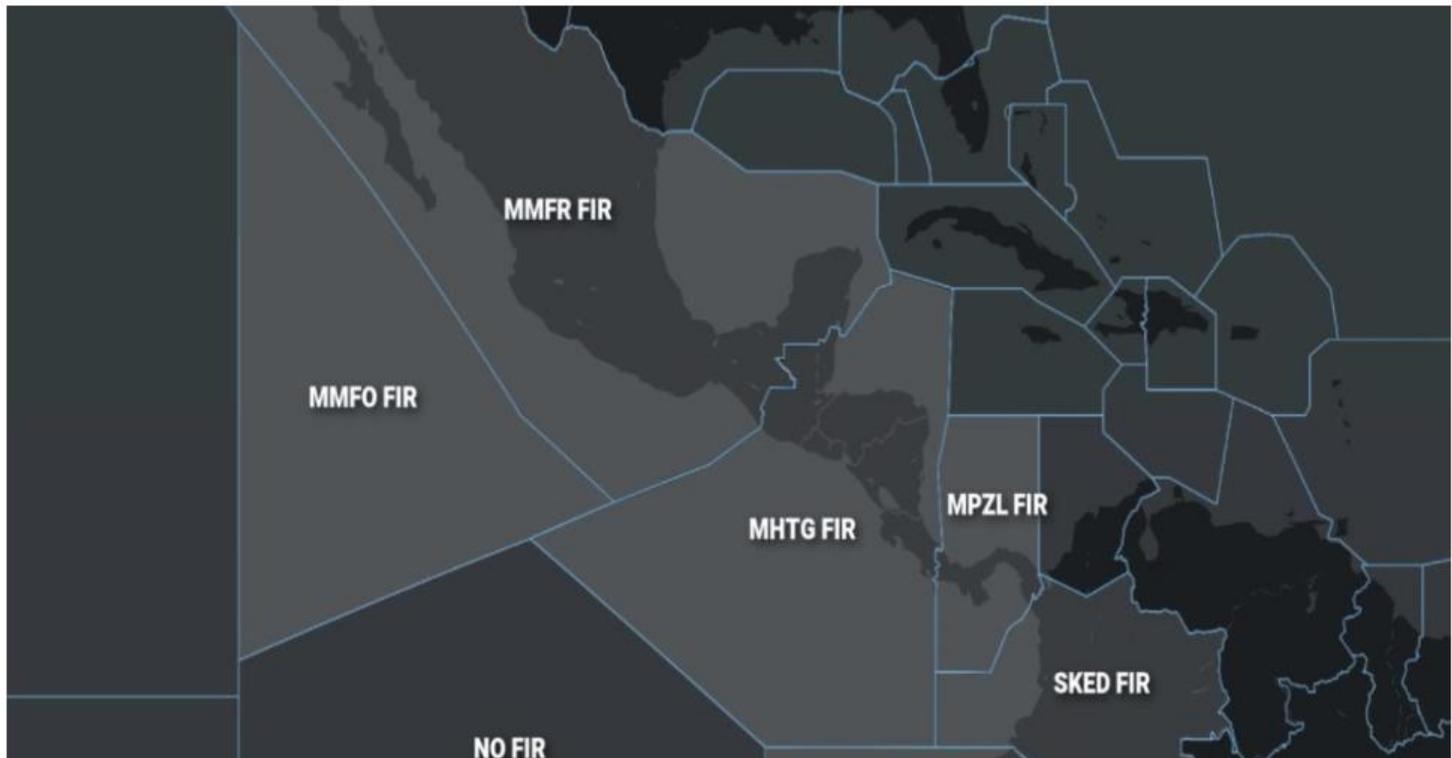


Amelia Walsh

Amelia Walsh is a private pilot who enjoys flying her family's Columbia 350. She is based in Colorado and loves all things outdoors including skiing, hiking, and camping.

FAA Issues Central America 'Hazardous Situation' Notams - Warns of security issues including GPS jamming and spoofing

(Source: Matt Thurber, AIN, January 19, 2026)



OpsGroup's Safe Airspace system highlighted the regions in Central America where a new series of FAA notams warns of potential security issues and GPS jamming and spoofing activity.

The FAA issued a series of notams on January 16 covering a large area of Central America and its flight information regions (FIRs), warning of a “potentially hazardous situation in the overwater regions.” These notams are valid through March 17.

“U.S. operators are advised to exercise caution when operating in the overwater areas above the Pacific Ocean in the Panama flight information region due to military activities and GNSS interference. Potential risks exist for aircraft at all altitudes, including during overflight and the arrival and departure phases of flight,” the FAA said.

The notams apply to U.S. airlines, commercial operators, anyone exercising privileges of an FAA airman certificate unless operating a U.S.-registered aircraft for a foreign air carrier, and all operators of U.S.-registered civil aircraft (except for those operated by a foreign air carrier).

According to OpsGroup's Safe Airspace website, the FIRs covered by the notams include Central America (MHTG), Panama (MPZL), Bogota (SKED), Guayaquil (SEFG), Mazatlan (MMFO), unassigned eastern Pacific (XX01), and Mexico (MMFR).

In a summary of the situation in Central America, security intelligence firm Dyami explained that the notams were issued because of “heightened U.S. security posture in the region, driven by expanding counter-cartel operations, strategic interests around the Panama Canal, and increased military coordination with regional partners.”

The primary driver for the notams is the U.S. military’s growing ISR, maritime patrols, and interdiction support, which “raise the likelihood of civil aviation exposure to dynamic airspace conditions and electromagnetic interference,” according to Dyami. Secondary drivers include “Cartels as national-security targets—political signaling enables broader tools; Panama Canal security—strategic protection efforts elevate military presence; Colombia and Ecuador spillover—intensified counter-transnational criminal organization posture impacts regional FIRs.”

Dyami highlighted operational risks that include possible GNSS degradation (GPS jamming and spoofing), increased likelihood of reroutes and altitude restrictions, greater need for real-time civil-military deconfliction, travel issues such as potential short-notice disruptions, and heightened security visibility.

Operators should be on the lookout for more “notams and updates, expanded GNSS interference warnings, U.S. policy statements on counter-cartel actions, Panama Canal security announcements, military assets build-up in the region, and Colombian/Ecuadorian military posture changes,” according to Dyami.

However, at this point, the company isn't suggesting that business aviation operators avoid flying in Central America, said Dyami founder and CEO Eric Schouten. “You could still fly,” he said. “It is advisable to keep a close watch on and monitor developments in that region, because things might happen. That is the reason the FAA is issuing the notams. [Our job] is to help them and guide them and inform flight operations and crew. It's never about saying no, it's about enabling business at the times that it's possible.”

SAFETY MANAGER'S CORNER

PRISM SMS User Login Information



Most usernames in PRISM SMS are FirstNameLastName (no spaces), but an account admin can look up usernames by going into the Account Manager in PRISM SMS and

clicking on the user. Once they are on the User Details page, they can click the edit icon  on the top right-hand side of the page to view the user's information like username, email address, or phone number. As a reminder, PRISM SMS does not allow email addresses to be used for the username.

If someone forgets their password, they can reset it by following the steps below:

- Go to the Log In screen: <https://prismsms.argus.aero/login>.
- Select "Forgot Password".
- Enter the username.
- An email will be sent to the user.
 - The email will include a link and information to reset their password.
- Click on the link in the "Reset Password" email.
 - The link will take the user to the reset password page.
 - The user can also create a first-time password here.
- The user will enter their password twice and click Reset Password.
 - When the user clicks Reset Password, the website will automatically take them to the login page.
- They'll enter their username and new password on the login page and click Log In.

If anyone has trouble logging into PRISM SMS, please contact PRISM Support at prism@argus.aero or your local account administrator.

 A screenshot of the PRISM SMS "Reset Password" web page. The page has a white background with a blue border. At the top left is the PRISM SMS logo. To the right of the logo is the title "Reset Password" in a bold, dark blue font. Below the title are two input fields: "New Password" and "Confirm New Password". Each field has a small eye icon to its right, indicating a password field. Below the input fields is a large, rounded blue button with the text "Reset Password" in white. At the bottom center of the page is a blue link that says "Back to Login".

Quote of the Month

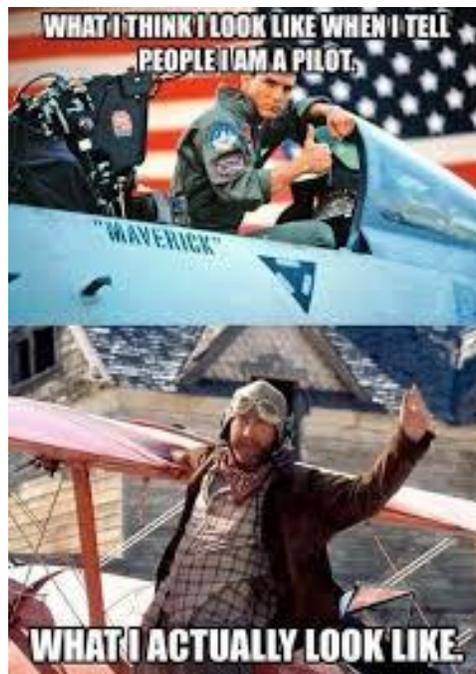
**Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak;
Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.**

BY: Winston Churchill



Shoot the messenger, so goes the old maxim. Receiving unwanted news does require some minimum level of courage and confidence, understanding that the right people in the right places can right the situation. But think about this as well: what if the unwanted news escaped discovery because no means existed to discover and communicate it? What if the unwanted news sat, festering and intensifying, until it virtually exploded into a full-blown and genuine crisis? That's when the "hindsighters" gather around their prey, asking rhetorically, "How could they not see this coming?" and stating how obvious the problems were and the simplicity necessary to fix them, thereby circumventing the entire crisis. Let's agree we all seek to avoid that type of mess, and let's agree it's best to have the opportunity to hear any and all unwanted news.

On Short Final...



Jenna Albrecht

Jenna.albrecht@prism.aero

Director, SMS Services

Wayne Ehlke

Wayne.Ehlke@prism.aero

Safety Analyst, SMS Services



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#PRISMPREFERS

UPCOMING COURSES

Feb 23-27, 2026—PROS Course
Aviation Auditor Training (AAT)
Denver, CO

Feb 26-27, 2026 -PRISM
SMS Training Course
Opa Locka, FL

Mar 9-11, 2026—PROS Course
Airline Safety Management System (SMS)
Virtual

Mar 31-Apr 2, 2026—PROS Course
Virtual ALAT Training
Virtual

Apr 13-17, 2026—PROS Course
Aviation Auditor Training (AAT)
Denver, CO

Apr 20-22, 2026—PROS Course
Virtual ICAT Training
Virtual

Apr 22-23, 2026 -PRISM
SMS Training Course
Scottsdale, AZ

Apr 23-24, 2026—PROS Course
Risk-Based IOSA Training
Virtual

Go to [Upcoming Training Classes](#) to register.

