



VIRGINIA FLIGHT SCHOOL SAFETY ARTICLE – NO 16/08

SPATE OF RECENT GENERAL AVIATION ACCIDENTS

The SA CAA recently released a communiqué regarding the spate of recent general aviation accidents. Here is an extract from the communiqué :

“It should be noted that there is not a common thread that can be identified as being a specific cause in these recent accidents that we can take action on, other than the pilots of these aircraft were not very experienced”.

“The leading cause of these accidents as proven by the outcomes of the completed accident investigations has consistently pointed to human factors as a leading cause of fatal accidents”.

“Human factors include incidents where aviation personnel ignore obvious things like weather conditions, complying with the required weight allowed by aircraft manufacturers and flying without enough fuel, etc, etc.

The Safety Section at VFS had a closer look at the issue and came to the conclusion that two key elements are involved in the recent high GA accident rate viz :

- Training; and
- Safety Culture

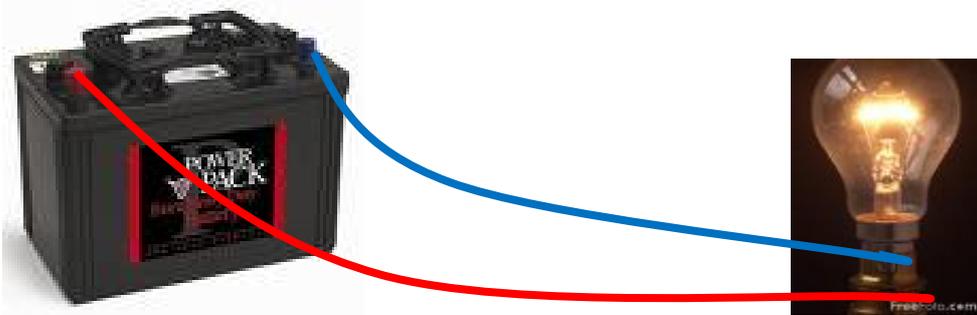
The aspect of training will firstly be considered. One has to start by investigating the concept of knowledge and the application thereof in the aviation environment as far as safety is concerned.

Knowledge. What is Knowledge?



Knowledge can be considered to be *range of relevant information*. There is an old adage that knowledge is power. This is not entirely correct. Knowledge is simply potential power. Knowledge becomes power with the effective application of relevant potential power (knowledge) in the achievement of a desired outcome.

To illustrate the point let us consider a battery/light bulb scenario :



BATTERY = POTENTIAL POWER
(KNOWLEDGE)

APPLICATION OF THE BATTERY
(POTENTIAL POWER) TO THE LIGHT
BULB = ACHIEVEMTN OF DESIRED
OUTCOME = LIGHT

KNOWLEDGE AND SAFETY

To ensure safety and therefore minimise aircraft accidents we as aircrew have to effectively apply relevant knowledge in the attainment of minimal loss to equipment and minimal injury to persons i.e. nothing gets broken and no one gets hurt!

WHY?

It ensures not only organisational viability but organisational prosperity which in turn ensures your viability and prosperity as an individual on all fronts – financial, personal (family), etc, etc which is more than enough reason to equip yourself as a pilot with all knowledge possible to avoid going into a risk area where something might get broken or someone might get hurt.

CULTURE

Culture is simply a way of doing things. With regard to safety if you things right nothing gets broken and no one gets hurt. Culture in this regard is established by habit. Habit is formed when actions are constantly repeated so that the actions become involuntary i.e. they happen without conscious thought.
