

*Dedicated to the Advancement of the International Helicopter Community*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Taking a 360-Degree Approach to Helicopter Safety**

*Alexandria, Va. (February 10, 2021)* – Helicopter Association International (HAI) began over 70 years ago as a group to promote and advocate for the helicopter industry. While HAI maintains that role today, the association also makes significant and robust contributions to safety programs for the industry. HAI’s vision is an industry with zero accidents, and in pursuit of that goal, its initiatives address safety across the continuum of helicopter aviation, including airframes, technology, and the people who use them.

“Over the past six months, with key stakeholders, HAI has completed a top-to-bottom review of our safety programs,” says James Viola, president and CEO of HAI. “We’ve strengthened our collaboration with industry partners and refocused our safety efforts on providing tangible resources for the helicopter community, including those targeted at helping pilots avoid or recover from IIMC, one of the leading causes of the accident discussed in the Feb. 9 National Transportation Safety Board hearing. As a result of this review, we’re ready to present several new elements in HAI’s safety program today.”

With human performance issues as a causal factor in the majority of aviation accidents, HAI believes that the best way to improve safety in our industry is by helping people to become safer pilots, maintenance technicians, operators, and aviation professionals.

“We believe that we can lower the industry accident rate significantly by addressing human factors,” says Viola. “HAI continues to promote a 360-degree approach to reducing accidents, one that addresses culture, processes and training, and the appropriate use of technology to reduce aviation risk.

### **56 Seconds to Live**

According to the US Helicopter Safety Team (USHST), unintended entry into instrument meteorological conditions (UIMC), also referred to as inadvertent entry into IMC (IIMC), consistently ranks as one of the top causes of US fatal helicopter accidents. In 2019 alone, UIMC accounted for 33% of fatal helicopter accidents and 21 fatalities, accentuating the urgency of addressing this problem.

HAI is proud to support today's release of [56 Seconds to Live](#). This UHST-produced video portrays a pilot’s rapid loss of control over the aircraft after attempting to continue VFR flight into IMC. Helicopter safety experts say the film does not exaggerate the dangers of UIMC.

“US accident statistics reveal that a helicopter pilot operating under VFR who unintentionally continues flight into IMC will very likely lose control of their aircraft and be dead within an average of 56 seconds,” says Nick

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## 360 Degrees of Safety

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Mayhew, industry co-chair for the USHST. “We must join industry stakeholders to do everything we can to reverse this alarming and unacceptable trend.” Mayhew hopes the film will spur pilots and operators to strengthen their training and procedures aimed at UIMC prevention and recovery.

### New Programs Under Development

HAI also has several other new programs under development, with rollouts scheduled for this Spring. They include:

- **Flight and Maintenance Risk Assessment Tool (FRAT).** HAI has partnered with a commercial provider, NGFT Solutions, to expand the scope and accessibility of its legacy FRAT program into an expansive suite of free, customizable safety tools optimized for mobile and offline use. A transition to the new application is planned for the second quarter of 2021. Additional details are available at [NGFT.com](http://NGFT.com).
- **Aviation Safety Action Program (ASAP).** A robust hazard reporting program is considered essential to improving safety, and small helicopter operators with limited resources sometimes struggle to field these programs. HAI has partnered with the [Air Charter Safety Foundation](http://Air Charter Safety Foundation) (ACSF) to provide HAI members with an Aviation Safety Action Program (ASAP) that provides third-party support for the reporting of aviation hazards and events. This program will be introduced to members by March of 2021.

### A Lifetime of Training

Because most accidents have human error as a causal factor, improving safety in the helicopter industry often focuses on training. “We must continue to address safety training through every opportunity, including recurrent training,” Viola says. “That training must address every aspect of a pilot’s performance, from training for specific aircraft and procedures to learning better aeronautical decision-making processes.

“For pilots, the development of a personal safety culture must begin on the first day of flight school and then never stop. Each flight is another test of our commitment to fly safely, which is our highest duty,” continues Viola. “Aviation operations must also build a robust safety culture, where each person is empowered and encouraged by management to take a personal responsibility in improving operational safety by following policies and procedures and reporting identified hazards.”

### Safety Management Systems

HAI strongly recommends that all aviation operations adopt a safety management system (SMS), which is endorsed by aviation regulators and safety organizations around the world as the best way to systematically manage aviation risk. SMS addresses safety culture and also incorporates an ongoing process to address identified hazards, manage risk, and improve the organization’s safety performance.

### Flight-Data Monitoring Programs

HAI supports the establishment of a proactive flight-data monitoring (FDM) program by helicopter operators conducting paying-passenger aviation activities, as that data can be utilized to reduce accidents and improve safety across that industry sector. HAI supports performance-based solutions and does not recommend mandating specific equipment across all missions and platforms.

### Additional Information

“Anyone who wants to know more about improving operational safety should visit the Safety section on [rotor.org](http://rotor.org), our website,” says Viola. “They’ll find a wealth of information, resources, and tools, from

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## **360 Degrees of Safety**

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information on SMS to flight risk assessment tools, and much, much more. We're also working on new safety products, such as training aids targeted to help pilots avoid IIMC accidents." A complete list of these programs and tools is attached to this document.

HAI leadership and staff are active members of the US Helicopter Safety Team, the Unmanned Aircraft Safety Team, and the Vertical Aviation Safety Team, and work with the FAA and other civil aviation regulators around the world on operational and safety issues. HAI regularly provides FAA-approved credits in safety education for pilots, maintenance technicians, operators, and other safety professionals, and offers safety accreditation for helicopter operations.

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*HAI is the professional trade association for the international helicopter industry. HAI members represent more than 3,000 aviation businesses and individuals who safely operate more than 4,500 helicopters approximately 2.3 million hours each year in more than 73 nations. HAI is dedicated to the promotion of the helicopter as a safe, effective method of commerce and to the advancement of the international helicopter community.*