

Facilitator's Guide: Aircrew Communication and Coordination

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U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center



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PROPONENT FOR THIS FACILITATOR'S GUIDE: U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center, ATTN: Directorate of Assessments and Prevention, U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center, Fort Rucker, Ala.

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FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

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PREFACE

Purpose This Facilitator's Guide provides the instructor with a guide for use with the video titled, *It Didn't Have to Be This Way*, produced by the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center, for the purpose of enhancing aircrew coordination and communication.

Disclaimer:

The characters and events depicted in this video are fictitious and based upon lessons learned over the years by the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center. Any similarity to any person or event is merely coincidental.

The purpose of this Facilitator's Guide and associated video is to provide a basis for discussion within U.S. Army aviation units (leaders and aircrews) that leads to enhanced aircrew coordination, communication and planning, through discussion and experiential learning.

To maximize the learning opportunity, we recommend the unit assign an experienced facilitator who can lead the small-group discussion using the critical learning points and guided questions provided below. Once identified, the facilitator will:

1. View the video and read the Facilitator's Guide to gain a good understanding of the critical discussion points.
2. Schedule a small-group training meeting.
3. During the meeting, introduce the video and read the legal disclaimer before showing the video.
4. Play the video uninterrupted from start to finish.
5. After viewing the video, use the critical discussion points and guided discussion questions below to assist in facilitating a discussion. There is no set duration for each critical learning point discussion. Make sure discussion relates to their organization's SOPs and policies, Army Regulations, DA Pamphlets and Training Circulars.

- **Critical Discussion Point 1 lead-in: If First Lieutenant Ellis had set a better tone for his subordinates.**
 - References: AR 95-1, ATP 5-19, TC 3-04.11, Aircrew Training Manual, organizational SOPs and procedures.
 - Facilitator asks: Tell me what you think of the way the air mission brief was conducted.
 - Guided discussion questions:
 - Q1. What would you have included that was missed during this brief? (Abort criteria, weather, maintenance, LZ/PZ information, routes, passenger information, IMC breakup, risk assessment, communications plan, NOTAMs, etc.)

- Q2. What techniques do we utilize to ensure all aspects of the mission and associated hazards are addressed during the mission brief? (Unit standardization SOPs typically contain minimum areas to be covered in mission briefs).
 - Q3. Should it be a formal briefing? Does the briefing have to follow a format or checklist? Discuss the merits of both.
 - Q4. What governs how we conduct mission briefings in our organization? (Division, brigade, battalion or company SOPs)
 - Q5. What controls could the lieutenant have used to mitigate the risk for the mission? (Given a proper mission brief utilizing a standardization SOP, should he have required a call from the crew before they took off to confirm legal weather? Or attempted to contact supported unit to determine actual weather at the PZ?)
- **Critical Discussion Point 2 lead-in: Had any of us recognized the importance, on a night like tonight, of a functional crew chief ICS.**
 - References: AR 95-1, ATP 5-19, TC 3-04.11, Crew Coordination, Aircrew Training Manual, organizational SOPs and procedures.
 - Facilitator asks: Have any of you ever experienced poor aircrew communications during a mission? Were the issues equipment related or internal barriers to communication, which were generated by the crew?
 - Guided discussion questions:
 - Q1. What equipment is required to launch IAW AR 95-1 and our unit SOP? (Reference table 5-2 in AR 95-1, additional requirements per unit SOP such as SATCOM, CMOS, etc.)
 - Q2. What would you do if your crew was on the PZ getting ready to take off on a large air assault and you experienced an ICS issue? (Notify AMC, change out cords or ICS boxes, use jump aircraft, etc.) Is this issue addressed in our SOP? What does it say for us to do?
 - Q3. What if it was a single ship VIP mission to transport a senior Army leader, elected official, or foreign dignitary, and the ICS was intermittent? (Do we change out cords or ICS boxes, use a jump aircraft?) Is this issue covered in our SOP and if so, what does it state we do?

- **Critical Discussion Point 3 lead-in: If I had stood firmer.**
 - References: AR 95-1, ATP 5-19, TC 3-04.11, Crew Coordination, Aircrew Training Manual (ATM), organizational SOPs.
 - Facilitator asks: Have you ever flown with a crewmember who created an environment where you were hesitant to speak up? What did you do to overcome this situation?
 - Guided discussion questions:
 - Q1. Good team relationships begin with effective communication among crewmembers. What are some of the breakdowns in crew coordination and communication that you see in this example? (Failure to communicate effectively and timely, failure to provide situational aircraft and mission advisories, failure to manage and coordinate actions, events, and workloads, failure to sustain a climate of ready and prompt assistance).
 - Q2. Can you think back to a time when you should have been more assertive about an issue or event, and didn't? If you didn't, why? What conditions existed that led to your hesitation?
 - Q3. What are your requirements for updating weather? Can you utilize regulatory requirements to assert your concerns about the mission? (AR 95-1 para 5-2c(7) for all IFR flights and/or VFR cross country flights, the weather forecast will be void one hour and 30 minutes from the time the forecast is received provided the aircraft has not departed).

- **Critical Discussion Point 4 lead-in: If Staff Sergeant Johnson had trusted his gut.**
 - References: ATP 5-19, TC 3-04.11, Crew Coordination, Aircrew Training Manual (ATM).
 - Facilitator asks: Does your duty position influence your ability to affect the overall safety of the mission/crew/aircraft?
 - Guided discussion questions:
 - Q1. What does it mean to you when the ATM discusses a positive working relationship regarding crew coordination? (Establish and maintain team relationships. Establish a positive working relationship that allows the crew to communicate openly, freely, and effectively in order to operate in a concerted

manner where a climate of professional assistance is easily found and promptly provided).

- Q2. Do you rely on the experience of more senior crewmembers to overcome your discomfort or inexperience with a situation/mission?
 - Q3. Have you been afraid to speak up because you are junior and don't have as much experience as someone else on the crew? Do you not feel you have an equal voice as a crewmember?
- **Critical Discussion Point 5 lead-in: If Mr. Williams had been more professional and hadn't recognized he was over his head until it was too late.**
 - References: AR 95-1, ATP 5-19, TC 3-04.11, Crew Coordination, Aircrew Training Manual (ATM).
 - Facilitator asks:
 - Have you ever been on a flight where someone's ego/overconfidence got the crew into an unsafe condition?
 - What did you do about it?
 - Did you report it to the appropriate leadership, or just let it go?
 - How would one report such an issue?
 - Guided discussion questions:
 - Q1. Because someone has a "ton of hours" does it mean he or she is invincible?
 - Q2. Does the amount of accrued flight hours equate to instant credibility? What other characteristics do you use to judge proficiency, reliability or capability?
 - Q3. Have you ever experienced a situation where someone felt he/she was "above" regulations/guidelines because of that person's experience? How was the situation handled? Did you speak up? How was your opinion received?
 - Q4. Without pointing the individual out, think about someone in our unit who may be overconfident in their abilities. What will you do if you are scheduled with that individual as their crewmember? Is that 'someone' here today? Is that 'someone' YOU?

- Q5. Do you feel you are so good at what you do that it isn't dangerous anymore? Do you think others may feel that you're over confident or complacent? What do you do to assure them that you are not?
- Q6. When selecting an AMC, does your organization look at judgment and maturity as well as experience IAW AR 95-1? (AR 95-1 para 4-20, the designation of air mission commander is an assignment of command responsibility and is not an aircrew duty assignment. Air mission commanders are chosen based upon recent aviation experience, maturity, judgment, their abilities for mission situational awareness, the understanding of the commander's intent, and not necessarily on rank or grade).
- Q7. When CW4 Williams arrived at the hangar, he was greeted by two enlisted Soldiers. When returning their salutes, CW4 William's salute turned into a high-five. While this behavior certainly had no bearing on the accident, his lack of discipline and professional etiquette could be manifested in other areas. Have you ever experienced this? Can you draw any correlations between this lack of professionalism and greater crew-related indiscipline?

Summary

Being safe doesn't happen by chance. Safety happens when individuals are properly trained, disciplined in planning and meet prescribed standards in mission execution. Use this resource as a guide for honing vital aircrew coordination, communication and planning skills. Readiness Through Safety!

For more safety resources, visit <https://safety.army.mil>.

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