



Interagency Aviation SAFETY ALERT



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Subject: Portable Electronic Device (PED) Safety and Security

Area of Concern: Safety and Security

Distribution: All Aviation Operations

Discussion: Several reports involving unsecured PEDs (such as electronic tablets and smartphones) have raised concern over their impact on flight safety. Most common occurrences are Electronic Flight Bag (EFB) items that have become loose and fallen about the cockpit. Many of the incidents reported within the SAFECOM system describe damage to the helicopter chin bubble area. These types of loose items roaming throughout the flight deck and cabin area can pose much greater hazards including interfering with flight controls (e.g., jamming pedals or limiting other flight control authority) which could ultimately result in an aircraft accident and loss of life.

A review of the SAFECOM database identified the following:

- [22-0422](#) tablet fell out of the aircraft during open door operations near people on the ground.
- [20-0095](#) tablet fell off the dashboard and cracked the chin bubble.
- [20-0014](#) tablet fell off the dashboard and cracked the chin bubble.
- [18-0752](#) tablet fell off the dashboard and cracked the chin bubble.
- [17-0473](#) tablet mount broke and fell out of the helicopter.
- [16-0061](#) tablet fell off the dashboard and cracked the chin bubble.

Electronic tablets should be securely mounted in the aircraft to reduce the risk of accidental drops and minimize distractions that arise with holding the device. The mount can vary based on aircraft and pilot preference, but in all cases, the device should be secured to prevent it from moving around the flight deck, sliding out of reach, and creating a hazard. The examples from the SAFECOM review above resulted in expensive repairs from unsecured electronic tablets and subjected all on board to a significant unnecessary risk.

Pilots and Operators should review their EFB programs to ensure that they are following the guidance in [AC 120-76](#). The Advisory Circular contains guidance on the operational use of EFB for all operators conducting flight operations under parts 91, 91K 121, 125, and 135 who want to replace required paper information or utilize other select applications as part of EFB functionality. An EFB program should also detail how the PED is stowed or mounted to prevent the device from jamming flight controls, damaging flight deck equipment, or injuring aircrew members should the device move about because of turbulence, maneuvering, or other action.

There has been an increase of agency personnel who are required to fly in performance of their duties using PEDs. Mounting is the best method of securing a device however, kneeboard and leg straps may also be used. Whether its tablets, pencils, water bottles, seat belts, or backpacks, it's imperative that all loose items are always secured.

SAFECOM [14-0359](#) (PED distraction: Wrong Airport inadvertently selected on Foreflight resulting in confusion) shows that as useful and indispensable tablets are in the cockpit, they can present unique challenges. Just like distracted driving, distracted flying can be dangerous. A pilot who is too focused on a tablet screen could lose situational awareness. Carefully select the right time to view charts or weather and resist the urge to divert attention, especially during critical phases of flight.

Preflight your PED along with your airplane or helicopter. Make sure that it is securely mounted, has updated data, and the battery is charged. Review the SAFECOM links above and learn from other operator's experience involving a loose PED while flying.

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