



# Department of the Interior Accident Prevention Bulletin

OAS-43  
(12/12)

No. DOI APB 13-02

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Subject: THINK SMART THURSDAYS.....AND HOLIDAYS

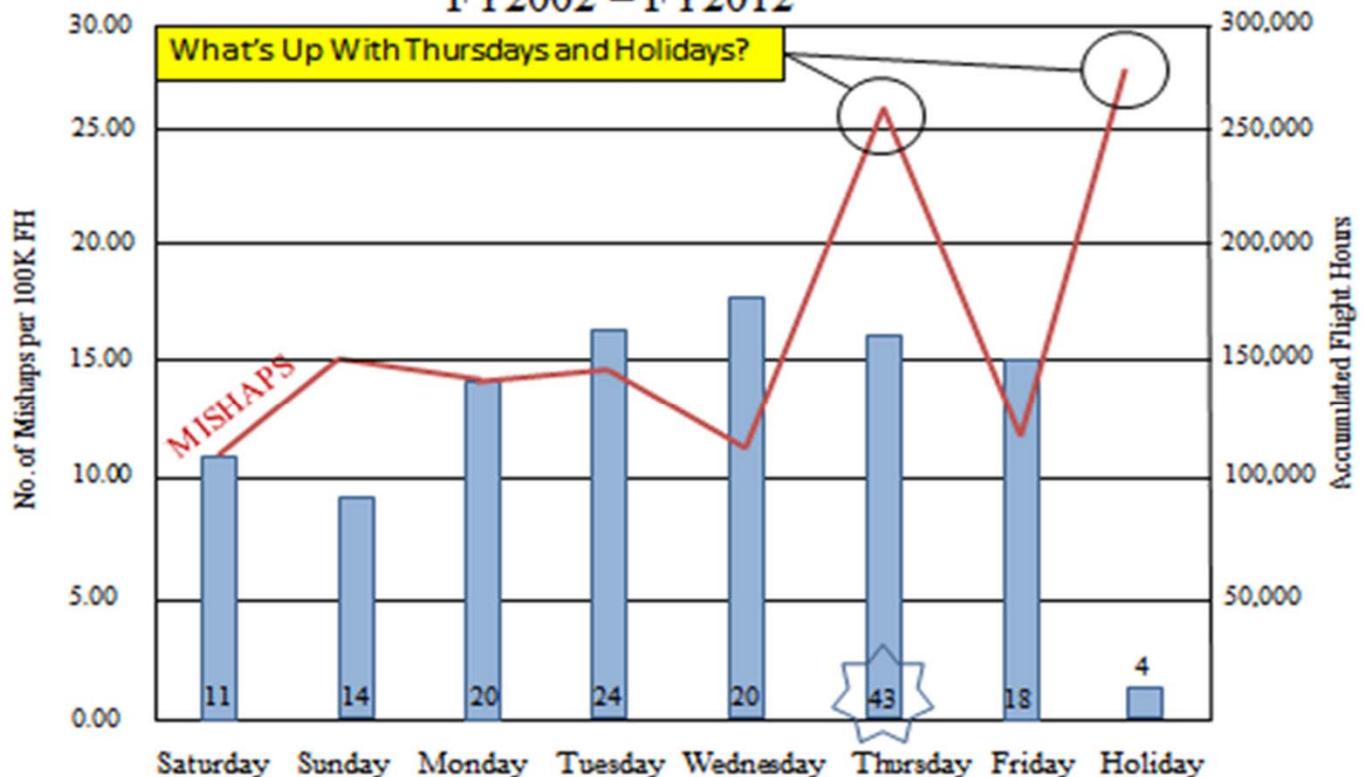
Area of Concern: Flight Safety

Distribution: All Flight Activities

**Question:** Have you ever wondered if more aircraft mishaps occur on one particular day of the week as opposed to others? Office of Aviation Services (OAS) asked that question after noticing a disturbing trend. OAS Aviation Safety then conducted a deeper investigation, using data from the searchable Interagency Aircraft Accident Database.

**What did we find?** – Over the past 11 years, Thursday stood out as having a significantly higher aircraft accident rate than any other day of the week. In fact, the **DOI aviation mishap rate for Thursday is over TWICE AS HIGH as the average mishap rate for the other six days.** **Almost one third of all DOI aviation mishaps occur on Thursday.** **The DOI aviation mishap rate for holidays is EVEN HIGHER.**

DOI Aviation Mishap by Day of Week  
FY2002 – FY2012



The blue columns in the chart (below) indicates the number of flight hours for each day of the week and holidays. The number of mishaps per 100,000 flight hours, or mishap rate is shown by the red line. The actual number of mishaps per day of the week are shown along the bottom.



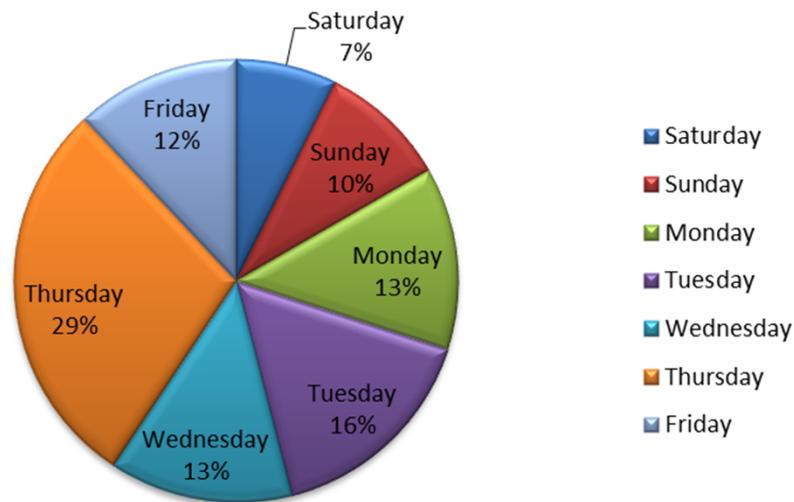
**What are the possible causes?** – Almost 90% of all aircraft mishaps involve human factors. These human factors occur at all levels. Possible human factors that may be contributing to the Thursday phenomena include:

- \* Time pressures - trying to wrap up a project before Friday or sunset?
- \* Fatigue due to the operations tempo from the previous days.
- \* Complacency – repetitious tasks where people end up taking short cuts.

Additional possible holiday factors include:

- \* Lack of management participation due to their absence.
- \* Time pressures – trying to finish up so you (or others) can begin your holiday.
- \* Lack of required personnel to adequately perform the mission as planned.

Percentage of DOI Aviation Mishaps by Day of the Week 2002 - 2012



**How can I use this knowledge?** – Knowledge is power, but only if you use it. Awareness is a key part of mishap prevention. Here are some suggested action items to help you and your organization apply this information in order to bend the trend and avoid becoming a DOI aviation mishap statistic:

1. Discuss this Accident Prevention Bulletin with your coworkers and supervisors.
2. Do any of the above human factors affect your Thursday or holiday flight operational decision making?
3. How can you and your organization control the adverse influences involving the Thursday and holiday phenomena so that your operations remain as safe as operations conducted on other days?
4. What support can your organization’s senior leadership provide (e.g. awareness, mission flexibility, etc.) to help you and your organization reduce the spike in aviation mishaps on Thursdays and holidays?
5. What other possible factors might be influencing your organization’s Thursday operational decision making?

*/s/ Keith C. Raley*

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