



# EXPERIMENTAL AIRCRAFT ASSOCIATION

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## IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO ALL EAA CHAPTER PRESIDENTS AND CHAPTER NEWSLETTER EDITORS EAA POLICY STATEMENT REGARDING MIDAIR COLLISION AVOIDANCE

In the wake of the recent tragic midair collision in California, a number of important questions are being asked about aviation safety and the role of the sport and general aviation pilot. Unfortunately, this accident can lead to uninformed speculation, sensationalism, and even hysteria. The aftermath of this accident will have far-reaching implications for sport and general aviation pilots as well as the safety of all airspace users. EAA believes this tragedy can lead to beneficial efforts to minimize the possibility of midair collisions.

### Is aviation safe?

Yes! In the long run, both commercial and general aviation has had an exceptionally good safety record. All pilots and aircraft owners have a vested interest in improving that safety record. We must continue to improve our personal proficiency and to adopt modern technology which will aid us in preventing accidents.

Unfortunately, the recent tragedy will probably result in calls for more regulation and more ground-based control which EAA believes will not prevent future midair collisions and will not enhance safety. EAA believes that the Department Of Transportation's and the Federal Aviation Administration's philosophy of 100 percent control from ground-based personnel and computers is seriously flawed.

### What is wrong with the DOT/FAA approach to midair collision avoidance?

It is obvious that the DOT/FAA philosophy and policy reflects an intention to provide 100% ground control of all aircraft.

EAA believes that the pilot in command has the ultimate responsibility for the conduct of his actions and the safety of his passengers.

### What about Airborne Collision Avoidance Systems (ACAS)?

Because of the recent tragedy, Airborne Collision Avoidance Systems are once again being discussed in the news media and by our elected representatives. EAA members know that ACAS systems have been examined and discussed in the pages of our monthly magazine SPORT AVIATION.

The truth of the matter is, an effective inexpensive electronic Airborne Collision Avoidance System has been available since at least 1976! Unfortunately, the DOT/FAA has done its best to ignore these efficient and effective Airborne Collision Avoidance Systems.

## Why does DOT/FAA oppose Airborne Collision Avoidance Systems?

The DOT/FAA has put a great deal of emphasis on requiring that any collision avoidance system be "compatible" with the DOT/FAA-run air traffic control system. In effect, the DOT/FAA wants the air traffic controller to be involved in everything.

In the meantime, the DOT/FAA has spent hundreds of millions of dollars on expensive, cumbersome and impractical ground-based collision avoidance systems which are still many, many years, if not decades, away from mass production.

As long ago as 1976 and 1982, federal legislation was introduced prodding FAA to end 20 years of waffling on the collision avoidance issue. Nevertheless, the DOT/FAA still says ACAS won't work in spite of well respected studies which conclude that ACAS is superior to any existing or planned DOT/FAA program.

### What should be done?

1. EAA believes the FAA will operate more efficiently and effectively as an independent agency rather than one which is subordinate to and under the close control of the Department of Transportation which is ill-equipped to deal with aviation matters.
2. EAA believes that the Office of General Aviation must be reestablished within the FAA.
3. FAA must be more responsive to the input of airspace users.
4. Most importantly, existing ACAS technology must be developed and used immediately.
5. The highly important "See and Be Seen" concept of aviation must be reemphasized and augmented by an effective ACAS. Ground-based control will never be as effective and efficient as an alert pilot aided by ACAS.
6. Important FAA Accident Prevention Programs and "Back to Basics" seminars must be promoted, aided and supported by the entire aviation community.

### What will it cost and who should pay the bill?

Airborne Collision Avoidance Systems already exist and work efficiently. The final development of an Airborne Collision Avoidance System which will be acceptable to commercial airlines, the military, and private aircraft owners should be the responsibility of the Federal Aviation Administration. Currently, some five billion dollars is lying idle in the Aviation Trust Fund. Clearly, in the interest of aviation safety, some of this money, which was paid into the trust fund by airspace users, should be used for the final development and implementation of an airborne collision avoidance system.

### What will it cost the private aircraft owner?

Reliable estimates indicate that an Airborne Collision Avoidance System for a light plane can be available, as an off-the-shelf item, for \$2,000 or less.

## What has EAA done?

In the February 1985 issue of SPORT AVIATION, EAA's Director of Flight Research wrote, "Since the FAA is charged with encouragement and advancement of all aviation, why isn't the simplest usable available collision avoidance plan put in place at the earliest possible time? In more than 20 years, there are and have been demonstrated technologies which can immediately provide pilots with better information than they now have, in terms of avoiding other aircraft. Is the DOT/FAA bureaucracy still more concerned with insistence on perfection for the air transport segment than for the immediate improved protection for all aircraft?"

EAA's flagship publication, SPORT AVIATION, has carried a number of articles on the subject of collision avoidance, collision avoidance devices and the "See and Be Seen" principle. The most recent SPORT AVIATION article on collision avoidance appeared in the August 1986 issue.

In May of 1985, the prototype of a promising new proximity warning indicator was demonstrated at the EAA Aviation Center by its developer.

The Experimental Aircraft Association has consistently urged the DOT/FAA to be more responsive to the input of airspace users.

### Will EAA support mandatory ACAS installment?

EAA believes that effective, inexpensive and proven airborne collision avoidance systems should be installed on all aircraft which normally utilize terminal control areas, ARSAs, and other high density traffic control areas.

Current regulations prohibit non-radio aircraft from using TCAs and other high density, closely controlled airspace. EAA believes the relatively inexpensive cost of ACAS is well worth the effort and expense if midair collisions are avoided.

EAA's endorsement of an effective Airborne Collision Avoidance System should be in no way construed to be a blanket approval of other efforts to control airspace or burden all private aircraft owners with complex and expensive electronic gear such as automatic altitude reporting devices and transponders. ACAS is more effective, less expensive and should be required only on aircraft which routinely use high density traffic areas.

FAA's reliance upon the philosophy of 100% control from the ground must be changed. There are simply not enough controllers, not enough radio frequencies and not enough radio "talking" time available to make such systems safe, effective and efficient. Sport and general aviation pilots are willing to do their part. It's time for FAA to quit dragging its feet.

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For more information, please feel free to call EAA Corporate Communication at (414) 426-4800.