

## Notice to all Pilots

Recommendations to Pilots from NARCAP  
on What to Do and What Not to Do if you Have a Near Encounter with  
an Unidentified Aerial Phenomenon

*Dear Pilot: You have probably heard about ufos and flying saucers and other strange lights and objects in the sky. But if you are like most pilots you don't believe in their existence or at least you don't think you will ever encounter one. Based on literally thousands of past pilot sighting and reporting statistics worldwide that we have studied over many decades you probably won't ever see something that you couldn't identify. But a small percentage of you will experience an unidentified aerial phenomenon (UAP). It is for you that we present the following things to do and not do during and after a close in-flight encounter.*

*Throughout the history of powered flight aircrews and air traffic controllers have reported seeing very unusual lights and objects, sometimes at close range. The fact that many of these incidents included effects that reduced aviation safety seems to have been lost in the larger discussion, pushed out of sight by events that were given higher priority. But these in-flight sightings continue to occur around the world even though they are not being reported as consistently as they should be. Identifying the potential safety impact of the so-called "other traffic" in these cases is what NARCAP is attempting to do.*

*Until we know much more about UAP no one can guarantee your safety in flight. There is no way to reliably determine that a UAP on an apparent collision heading will always avoid your aircraft. The high rate of closure in many cases represents a threat that cannot be ignored. Indeed, there is no reason for aircrews to expect that the UAP will simply avoid the aircraft on its own. Given the low survival rate of aircrews involved in midair collisions and the reported radar transparency of many UAP it cannot be said with certainty that UAP have not been a primary factor in past catastrophic air crashes. Ultimately it is the aircrew's judgment and ability to assess risk that defines an appropriate response to danger. That ability to assess risk accurately is dependent on education and adequate preparation. We believe that following these conservative recommendations is likely to contribute to improved flight safety and also help you remember the basic details better.*

*We understand your reluctance to report these incidents. However, if you do not report your sighting you do the safety community a disservice because you have prevented (or pre-filtered) vital information from reaching investigators who are trying to discover the influence of UAP on flight safety. So here are NARCAP's suggestions as to what you should do in such situations.*

## **Do:**

- 1.) Do **Aviate** - Fly the aircraft FIRST. Observe the UAP, but not to the point of distraction. Keep your scan going. Keep track of all your aircraft systems to insure they are functioning properly. If your aircraft systems are starting to fail or are unreliable deal with it as best you can. Continue to fly the aircraft, don't let it fly you.
- 2.) Do **Navigate** - Maintain your situational awareness. Stay aware of your UAP traffic but not to the exclusion of everything else. (i.e., terrain, position, other known traffic, etc.)
- 3.) Do **Communicate** - Determine if Center has any other known traffic in your area. If so, determine its location. If they aren't painting the UAP go back to steps 1 & 2. Admit to Center that you have an unknown object or light nearby and answer all their questions. Doing this can help contribute to your overall safety.
- 4.) Do **Delegate** your F.O. (if one is present) to observe the UAP if the UAP is on the starboard side of your aircraft. If the UAP is on the port side of the aircraft delegate your F.O. to fly while you act as observer. It only takes one pilot to fly and one to observe and advise. If both are preoccupied with observing then nobody is aviating (see step 1).
- 5.) Do try to **Discriminate** as soon as possible whether or not the other object is a conventional airplane. If it is you should follow normally approved flight-control (and avoidance) maneuvers that you have trained for. If it is not a conventional airplane it is likely that its appearance and flight dynamics will clearly demonstrate this to you in amazing ways. Many pilots have been captivated by what they see nearby them and are distracted from flying their airplane (see step 1).
- 6.) Do **Describe** using your on-board microphone as many details as you can (during the encounter if possible) in the order in which they are happening. If they are present have other witnesses in the cockpit do the same. The more voice recorded details there are the more valuable your sighting will be for later scientific research by staff of the Aviation Safety Reporting System (ASRS) and NARCAP specialists. Even if your verbal description is not recorded at the time later on you will remember the details better by doing this. You might request a cabin attendant to come forward to write down notes and even serve as an eye witness.
- 7.) Do **Write down** the following basic details as soon as practical: time, location, and those visual features of the UAP that convince you that it is not another airplane. Noting changes in its angular size and movements relative to your window frame is also important particularly if you are under straight and level autopilot control at the time. Also include all cockpit instrument deviations from nominal (when they started and when they ended), and total duration of the sighting incident. While there are many other UAP details of interest these are the more

important ones. The more accurate your notes are the safer future flights are likely to become. The longer you wait to do this the more errors of memory and perception will occur and the less likely you will be to make any report at all.

8.) Do **make a 100% confidential report** of your sighting both to the FAA's Aviation Safety Reporting System (ASRS) and to NARCAP upon landing at [www.narcap.org](http://www.narcap.org). NARCAP provides a specially designed pilot reporting form for this purpose. This request applies to all flight crew witnesses on board because the reliability and validity of the details can be enhanced by multiple witness reports. NARCAP does not disclose witness identity details to anyone. We use the same confidentiality procedures as are used by the ASRS. Our only goals are to improve flight safety and gain a better scientific understanding of these phenomena.

9.) Do try to **radio other aircraft in your area** for visual confirmation of the UAP. Doing this can encourage other flight crew to make their own reports when they might not otherwise do so. It can also improve the chances of triangulation to the UAP and thereby improve air safety and assist Center in locating it on radar.

10.) Do **let NARCAP know** if you want a copy of its investigation findings of your sighting.

### **Don't:**

1.) **Don't let this event rattle you** as it unfolds. Work the problem. Force yourself to keep focused on the job at hand - flying your aircraft. You can fall apart later. Many past pilot reports have revealed that some UAP behave very dynamically; this includes high speed acute angle turns, sudden stops, acceleration and disappearance (and/or reappearance), and even head-on approaches with last second veering away or near-misses. Some phenomena appear to possess strong magnetic fields and/or electric charge that can cause cockpit instruments to malfunction. These events can cause confusion and high stress in the cockpit. Some UAP appear to possess extremely coordinated flight capabilities. In spite of all this try to stay as calm as possible! In the final analysis each incident is different and will call upon critical judgments and calm responses by the flight crew throughout the encounter.

2.) **Don't attempt to out-maneuver or "shake" the UAP.** Hundreds of reliable pilot reports indicate that you probably won't be able to anyway.

3.) **Don't attempt to chase or engage the UAP** in any manner. If possible, place the UAP behind you or move away from it.

4.) **Don't flash your landing lights at it** or try to signal it in any manner in the interest of aeronautical safety. Scores of past pilot reports suggest that if you do some UAP may appear to respond to your signals. The significance of this is not yet known. If this happens don't let it

distract you from flying.

5.) **Don't rely on any cockpit instrument that has unexpectedly changed** during your encounter. A majority of pilot reports where instruments were affected by the near proximity of a UAP have confirmed that these disturbances were not permanent. Nevertheless, include all details of malfunctioning hardware on your post-flight equipment maintenance report even if these instruments returned to normal operating condition upon landing.

6.) **Don't inform your passengers during the event** unless you feel it is safe to do so. It is generally true that the more witnesses the better, however, the possibility of panic within the cabin must be avoided at all cost. You may want to instruct cabin attendants to make an appropriate general announcement after the fact to see if anyone saw the UAP and to suggest that they might want to give their assistance as witnesses by contacting NARCAP at [www.narcap.org](http://www.narcap.org). Again, the identity of all reporting witnesses will be protected. Their reports can help back up yours.

Please go to NARCAP's website for more information - [www.narcap.org](http://www.narcap.org)

*Disclaimer*

*These recommendations represent conservative, common sense actions to take based on many decades of aviation research. NARCAP does not accept legal responsibility for any incident, accident or consequence (either direct, indirect or implied), which may result from the use of any of these suggested recommendations, which must remain entirely voluntary.*

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