



# America's pilots are banding together to protect our airports.

Participate with your fellow pilots in the safekeeping of general aviation's neighborhood – our home airports.



See potential criminal activity at your airport?  
call **1-866-GA-SECURE**

## Why we need Airport Watch

Pick up any newspaper and you know why we need an airport watch. General aviation is under suspicion as a potential launch point for terrorist activity. After the events of September 11, 2001, the people in your community may have a different view of airplanes and their potential use as weapons. You may even share that concern. The world changed radically that terrible day, and it is incumbent on us – the people who depend on general aviation aircraft for our livelihood, our recreation, our personal transportation – to do our share to make sure that our airports are safe.



Every pilot is part of the larger aviation community. For pilots, our airports are our communities and we need to protect them just like we watch our own homes and neighborhoods. Pilots are the first to know that someone doesn't belong on the airport or that some activity at the airport is outside normal routines. At general aviation airports, the cost of implementing security programs that might include complete fencing of the airport's perimeter are, for the most part, cost prohibitive.

But, with more than 600,000 pilots based at virtually every general aviation airport in the United States, AOPA and our members have a tremendous opportunity to make a difference in security at GA airports.

There is no doubt that the federal government could not afford, nor is it necessary for them to regulate those airports. That's why AOPA supports 1-866-GA-SECURE. It's the number to call when you see something suspicious at an airport.

In this post-attack atmosphere, we can no longer say, "That could never happen." We don't know what can happen and what can't – even at a quiet little airport. While unlikely, the potential remains for general aviation airplanes to be used by terrorists. This unlikely possibility brings with it the potential for security officials to impose restrictions on airport access and use. We can lessen that need by protecting our own aviation neighborhoods.

*Show your community that pilots are keeping watch at their local airports. Be ready to call the National Response Center at 1-866-GA-SECURE*

## **Be part of AOPA's Airport Watch. It's easy!**

*You just need eyes and ears!*

Police departments will tell you that the best protection your home can have is an alert neighbor. AOPA's Airport Watch operates just like a neighborhood watch. The people on a neighborhood watch know their neighbors' habits, who is on vacation, whose car belongs where, and they are able to spot trouble, sometimes before it happens. AOPA is



bringing the same concept to Airport Watch. We want you to heighten your attention at the airport – get to know your fellow hangar tenants, pilots, and aircraft owners.

Being part of AOPA's Airport Watch doesn't take extra time. All you have to do is go about your business at the airport – whether it's flying, hangar flying, performing maintenance, or just socializing. You don't have to write reports or attend lengthy meetings. Just follow these guidelines and be prepared to call 1-866-GA-SECURE if you see any activity that does not seem right to you.

Here are some ways pilots can show their communities that pilots are responsible citizens who are concerned about security at our airports. Remember, these tips work best with frequent visits to your airport!

- **Have your ID ready.** Always carry a government-issued photo ID for yourself. Even though you know your passengers, insist that they also arrive with government-issued picture identification in case of challenge by security or airport personnel. It also makes sense to carry your pilot certificate with you, even if you're not flying that day. Most pilots carry these in their wallets, but the combination of a photo ID and a pilot certificate is now required by the FAA.
- **Be cooperative.** We want the community to know that we are willing to comply with added security measures. You may have flown out of the same airport for 20 years and think "everybody knows me," but the brandnew security guard doesn't. Make it easy for them to do their job, and be thankful that they're doing it well.
- **Share information.** Supply your airport operator or FBO with photos of pilots authorized to use your airplane so that new or

infrequent users won't be mistaken for an unauthorized lawbreaker. If someone else is going to fly your aircraft, inform your FBO by telephone. Let ramp staff know anytime your plane is RON so they know it's not missing without reason; inform them when the airplane is to be down or shouldn't be going anywhere, so they can challenge any movement of your airplane during the period of inactivity.

- **Get to know your airport community.**

Introduce yourself to airport neighbors and become familiar with the aircraft these neighbors fly. Not only will you meet and interact with new people and new airplanes, but also you'll be better prepared to notice new airplanes and new faces at your airport.

- **Greet strangers.** Introduce yourself to new faces at your airport – particularly new flight students and visitors to your home field and transient pilots you meet. At once, you can resolve many questions about these folks and help give your home airport a reputation as a friendly place to fly.

- **Stand united.** Organize (or help organize) a series of meetings at the airport to discuss security issues, any changes or new rules, and to generally get to know your airport neighbors while sharing in the effort to protect your community. If such meetings already exist, attend. Believe that "it can happen here" and don't wait for the other guy to take charge.

- **Have your tools handy.** Bring your cell phone to the airport – and make sure it's charged. Have a pen and paper close by in case you have to write down N numbers or descriptions. Consider having an inexpensive camera – even a disposable one – at the ready to photograph what you see that is suspicious.

- **Spread the word.** Talk about AOPA's Airport Watch. Let people know that general aviation pilots take security at our airports seriously, that we voluntarily act to be on the alert for what is happening at our airports. You'll also reinforce the message that the general aviation community takes care of itself without the need for increased and possibly burdensome government regulations.

- **Be prepared for the long haul.** Keep the effort going. Help sustain these and other security efforts once they're started. The new reality of operating aircraft post 9/11 is not a drill and it's not a flash in the pan.

Momentum must be sustained in the long term, both for the safety and security of our airplanes and airports, as well as for our long-term protection from the imposition of rules that impinge on our freedom to fly.

## **Report what you find unusual!**



Talk first to the local airport management or staff, and back up your report by calling 1-866-GA-SECURE.

**NEVER** approach someone you fear may be about to commit an illegal act or crime with an airplane. Make some notes, such as the person's appearance, clothing, car license plate, type of aircraft, and N number. Take a picture, but keep your distance if the situation seems hostile. If you can't safely contact the closest authorities or the airport management without exposing yourself to risk, leave the field or go to your car and talk on your cell phone. It could be your best weapon in fighting airport crime.

**Provide details.** Be specific in details whenever you report something amiss to authorities. Generalized concerns (e.g., "That guy looked shifty to me...") may not carry the appropriate sense of urgency.

**Details carry weight:**

*"I'm at the Anytown Municipal Airport and just saw [something dangerous] loaded into a tan-and-orange plane with the N number N123. The pilot seems to be intimidated by his passengers; the passengers are keeping out of sight. I think something bad is about to happen."* Pay attention to height, weight, clothing, or other identifiable traits.



***Never hesitate to call 1-866-GA-SECURE!  
If danger is imminent, call 911.  
We can never be too sure of our safety!***

## **It's your home field – cover your entire neighborhood!**

Some situations require special attention. Not every one of your home neighbors is the same, so here are some tips for handling special situations:

### **For CFIs with primary student pilots:**

Control non-solo students' access to the ignition key until dual is to begin. The CFI might unlock the airplane for preflight and keep the ignition key; install an ignition switch keyed differently than airframe keys; or allow access to the ignition key but install a throttle lock for which the CFI retains the key. Depending



on the environment, it might be useful to assign a special check-on for students (soloed and presolo) – particularly younger students.

### **For FBO rental desks:**

Create a check-in desk and procedure where keys to based and transient aircraft (or hangar keys for based planes) are kept for checkout to pilots and owners with preauthorization on file. Encourage owners of rental or loaned airplanes to provide advance photo records of those authorized to rent or use their aircraft. Insist on photo ID for pilots not personally known to the staff. It's for their good as well as the public's. Establish uniform "duress procedures."



## For ag applicators:

Provide airport neighbors and management with a list of all people with authorized access to your equipment – consider including a photo of those people. Increase the strength of locks on chemical storage areas and add multiple auxiliary locks to your applicator aircraft.

*Remember: Crime happens because of opportunity. To protect yourself and your airport, make access difficult. Criminals won't want to hang around an airport full of people who are alert and aware of their activities. Exposure is not within the comfort zone of a criminal.*

It's up to all of us who fly to keep flying safe, to keep our airports free of individuals who would do us harm, and to welcome those who truly want to share our freedom to fly.

***Protect that freedom to fly – join AOPA's Airport Watch program today!***

## **Security begins with your own airplane**

Charity may begin at home, but so does security. People seldom forget to lock their homes; cars are locked less frequently. But too often pilots neglect to lock the doors of their aircraft. "It's always hangared;" "It's too easy to break into;" "I'm just running out to get a sandwich;" are all excuses for poor security.



*Throttle Lock*

Crime happens because of opportunity. Don't ever make it easy for anyone! Lock your

airplane's doors, regardless of whether your airplane is hangared or tied outside – always!

For added security, consider using an auxiliary lock to further protect your aircraft from unauthorized use.

Options available include several fine locks for propellers, throttle, and prop controls. Pilot supply catalogs have a wide range of products to deter tampering and theft of your aircraft.



Then take home all your keys – to the airplane, hangar, and auxiliary locks. You might want to consider whether you keep your airplane key on the same keychain as your hangar key. Make it as difficult as possible for someone to gain access to your airplane.

***Together we can make general aviation the least attractive option available to the terrorist or other criminal!***

## **AOPA Airport Watch wants you**

America's pilots should be on the frontlines of monitoring what goes on at our airports. When we band together, we become a powerful network of watchdogs for what is happening at our airports. It's just common sense: We spend time at the airport, we know the people, we know the airplanes.

It's self-defeating for us as general aviation pilots to dig in our heels and act as if our community and government officials should simply understand and accept what we know

about aircraft, pilots, and all the regulations we live by. It's a different world, and we must adapt to it. We must step up to today's challenge. We must do our share to guard against criminal activity at our airports.

AOPA's Airport Watch program will protect our homes and neighbors by guarding our aircraft and the airports we use. When you call 1-866-GA-SECURE, you will act as part of a community-wide general aviation effort to protect our aircraft, our airports, and our aviation communities.

We can protect our freedom to fly by simply exercising our freedom to fly, by visiting our airports often, and by joining general aviation's own airport-community safety program, the AOPA's Airport Watch. Begin your participation now!

*America's pilots banding together will make a difference.*

## **Are you ready to do your share?**

Your participation at your local airport will make this program a success. Now you don't have to wonder what you can do to ensure you will be able to enjoy the freedom of flight. Without your help, others – who don't love airplanes like we do – will impose their own security program on our community!

Through the AOPA Airport Watch Program, we have the power to reduce or even eliminate the perception that private airplanes pose a significant threat to the public. Protect our flying community and our freedom to fly while protecting our nonflying friends and neighbors by protecting your airplane and airport like you do your home and neighborhood!

# Use your eyes and ears to keep our airports safe

 Here's what to look for:

- Pilots who appear under the control of someone else.
- Anyone trying to access an aircraft through force – without keys, using a crowbar or screwdriver.
- Anyone who seems unfamiliar with aviation procedures trying to check out an airplane.
- Anyone who misuses aviation lingo – or seems too eager to use all the lingo
- People or groups who seem determined to keep to themselves.
- Any members of your airport neighborhood who work to avoid contact with you or other airport tenants.
- Anyone who appears to be just loitering, with no specific reason for being there.
- Any out-of-the-ordinary videotaping of aircraft or hangars.
- Aircraft with unusual or obviously unauthorized modifications.
- Dangerous cargo or loads – explosives, chemicals, openly displayed weapons – being loaded into an airplane.
- Anything that strikes you as wrong – listen to your gut instinct, and then follow through.
- Pay special attention to height, weight, and the individual's clothing or other identifiable traits.

*Use your common sense.  
Not all these items indicate  
terrorist activity.*



**When in doubt, check it out!  
Check with airport staff or call  
the National Response Center  
at 1-866-GA-SECURE!**



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**Participate now!**



**AOPA's AIRPORT WATCH PROGRAM**

421 Aviation Way • Frederick, MD 21701  
[www.aopa.org/airportwatch](http://www.aopa.org/airportwatch)

**1-866-GA-SECURE**

National Response Center