

# ANTICIPATE AND INTEGRATE AT NORTH SHORE

Understanding the needs of others at a busy mixed-use aerodrome like North Shore will go a long way to keeping you and others safe.

North Shore aerodrome has flight training schools for both fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters, small airline operations going in and out, and there's a lot of private flying too.

North Shore Aero Club is the aerodrome owner and the biggest operator there, doing a lot of training.

Chief Flying Instructor Daryl Gillett says a major issue is people not complying with the circuit pattern, despite constant reminders.

"For example, joining right downwind or right base when it's a left-hand circuit. Or aircraft doing right-hand turns into a left-hand circuit, which conflicts with existing traffic."

Daryl says it makes a mockery of the standard procedures published in the AIP.

"It means that particularly junior pilots, student pilots – they don't know what the heck's going on. They are expecting to see aircraft in particular places and they don't because the aircraft is joining however they want, or vacating as well, for that matter."

He says just calling 'non-standard' does NOT absolve pilots of compliance with the rules.

"Part 91 is pretty specific, the AIP is pretty specific and obviously all the procedures are promulgated on the plate as well."

He says it's more often itinerant pilots who don't comply, which can create havoc at such a busy aerodrome.

Roy Crane, the CEO of North Shore Helicopter Training, agrees.

"Sometimes aircraft, especially helicopters, will come in and do their thing and will do a right turn on a left-hand circuit.

"Just stick to the standard joining procedures, then everyone knows where they should be," says Roy.

Daryl says helicopter and fixed-wing pilots need to be aware that they need to integrate.

He says the aerodrome is pretty unique.

"At bigger aerodromes like Ardmore, the helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft are pretty segregated, the circuit patterns are really separate. But at North Shore we have to integrate into the same circuit pattern, albeit with helicopters at a slightly lower altitude."

Daryl says there are also wake turbulence considerations.

"If you've got a helicopter using the same runway, particularly in light wind conditions where the wake doesn't get blown away as readily, it can be a real issue for a fixed-wing aircraft approaching from behind.

"Helicopters often hover just off the side of the runway too; a big rescue helicopter, for example, producing a massive amount of wake turbulence can be a real danger."

Roy Crane has been flying in and out of North Shore aerodrome for 17 years.

He says as a busy helicopter training company, they have to work in with the equally busy fixed-wing school.

“We co-exist well together because we have a really good working relationship.”

He says understanding what each other is doing is the key.

“For example, fixed-wing aircraft do glide approaches, while we do autorotations. If visitors come in and don’t understand what we’re doing, there’s potential for confusion.”

His company, which also flies commercially, tries to steer clear of the main vector.

“We join in on the crosswind runway and stay clear of the main 21/03 just so we can try and come in underneath the fixed-wing guys.”

Roy says helicopter pilots also need the understanding of fixed-wing pilots.

“They maintain speed as they come in to land, whereas helicopters slow down. What can happen is that fixed-wing guys can get frustrated because we’re taking longer on finals.

“We are entitled to use the runway so fixed-wing guys need to be patient and not get too close behind us. The best thing they can do is increase their separation between us so the runway is clear for when they want to come in and land.”

He says pilots need to identify where each other is in the circuit.

“It’s just trying to segue ourselves in between each other.”

Daryl Williamson is Barrier Air’s Chief Pilot and has been flying in and out of North Shore for various companies for the last 12 years.

He says when it’s busy, there can be three or four fixed wings doing touch and goes.

“Joining can be quite a challenge sometimes, just trying to slot in with a whole mixture of traffic all flying at different speeds.”

Daryl says that’s exacerbated by a wide range of aircraft with varying capabilities.

“Everything from slow home-builts to higher performance aircraft and the different range of abilities. It’s a training venue.

“Helicopters do a lot of hover taxiing on the cross vector as well so there are considerations there with spacing.”

He says see and be seen, and make as many radio calls as necessary.

“Stick to the published procedures because you’re very close to the border with Whenuapai, so there’s not a lot of movement area outside of the circuit.

“The aero club is good; if you’re not familiar with North Shore, give them a call, they are quite happy to help and give you advice.” ➤

