



Lock Up. Look Out.

Participate with your fellow pilots in the safekeeping of general aviation's local neighborhoods—our home airports.

Report suspicious activity:

1-866-GA-SECURE

866-427-3287

Why we need AOPA's Airport Watch

There is a clear and present danger to general aviation. You may see it often when you pick up the newspaper or turn on the TV. "Those little airplanes" are under suspicion as a potential launch point for terrorist activity. In the years since September 11, 2001, people in your community may have a different view of all aircraft and their potential to be used for harmful purposes. Various media have helped to spread that fear. In reality, that one terrible day changed our world, making it vital that we—the people who depend on general aviation aircraft for our livelihood, our personal transportation, and our recreation—do our share to keep our airports safe and secure.



Breaches to airport security can happen anywhere. Widely publicized security incidents, while not terrorist related, have led to calls for drastic security measures and severe penalties that can affect all pilots. No matter where you fly, security affects you and your ability to fly. This is not an issue of urban versus rural or East Coast versus West Coast. Nationwide, rare instances of stolen aircraft have occurred, usually by easy access to unsecured keys or through unlocked gates. Make no mistake about it—those thefts hurt us all.

What is AOPA's Airport Watch?

Every pilot is part of the larger aviation community. For pilots, our airports are like our neighborhoods, and we need to protect them just like we would our own homes. Pilots are the first to know when someone doesn't belong at the airport or that some activity is outside normal routines. So it is up to all of us to monitor and look for ways to prevent incidents from happening. Or, someone else will step in and tell us what we must do, regardless of cost or how difficult it is to implement.

With more than 650,000 pilots based at virtually every general aviation airport in the United States, AOPA members and the aviation community have a tremendous opportunity to make a real difference in security at general aviation airports.



We cannot rely on the federal government to pay for costly security measures at every general aviation airport, nor is it necessary.

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 traditional neighborhood watch. The people on a neighborhood watch know their neighbors' habits, when they are on vacation, whose car belongs where, and they can spot trouble, often before it happens. AOPA has brought the same concept to AOPA's Airport Watch. We want you to heighten your attention at the airport. Get to know your fellow hangar tenants, pilots, and aircraft owners. As a part of AOPA's Airport Watch, the Transportation Security Administration has partnered with AOPA to provide a simple, easy-to-remember nationwide toll-free reporting hotline. It's **866-GA-SECURE** (866-427-3287).

Take part in AOPA's Airport Watch. It's easy!

Lock Up. Look Out.

Being part of AOPA's Airport Watch should be a part of every pilot's checklist. All you have to do is go about your business at the airport— whether it's flying, hangar talk, performing maintenance, or socializing, just be more alert. Follow these guidelines and be prepared to call 866-GA-SECURE (866-427-3287) if you see any activity that does not seem right to you.

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

Here are some ways we can show our communities that pilots are responsible citizens who truly are concerned about security at our airports.

- **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 aircraft, but you will be better prepared to notice any suspicious actions.

- **Become familiar with and follow existing security procedures.**

Meet with your airport or FBO management to review existing security procedures. Practice these security procedures each time you visit the airport. Don't circumnavigate electronic gates or pass out entry codes for convenience.

- **Be cooperative.** We want the community outside the airport to know that we are willing to comply with added security measures. Pilots are part of the local community, and we want it all to be safe. You may have flown out of the same airport for 20 years and think "everybody knows me," but the new security guard doesn't. Make it easy for them to do their job, and thank them for doing it well.

- **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. This serves several purposes; it helps give your home airport a reputation as a friendly place to fly and enables you to identify anyone that may be behaving in ways that seem out of place.

- **Share information.** Supply your airport operator or FBO with photos of pilots authorized to use your aircraft 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 airplane overnights at another



location so they know it's not missing without reason; inform them when the aircraft is to be down or shouldn't be going anywhere, so they can challenge any movement of your aircraft during the period of inactivity.

- **Have your ID ready.** Always carry a government-issued photo ID. Don't leave it in your car, even if you are not flying. If you take passengers, insist they have a government-issued photo ID, too. You may know your passengers, but security or airport personnel may not, and they have a responsibility to challenge any strangers. It also makes sense to carry your pilot certificate with you, again, even if you're not flying that day. Most pilots carry these in their wallets, but the FAA now requires that you have both a photo ID and your pilot certificate on you when flying.
- **Have your tools handy.** Bring your cell phone to the airport—and make sure it's charged. Add 866-GA-SECURE (866-427-3287) to your speed dial or pre-programmed numbers. 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—ready to photograph what you see that is suspicious. Gather what information you can, but call the hotline rather than put yourself in any danger. Call 911 if immediate law enforcement response is needed.
- **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 as often as possible. Believe that “it can happen here” and don’t wait for the other guy to take charge.

- **Be prepared for the long haul.** Complacency is our worst enemy. Security problems didn’t start overnight, and they won’t go away overnight either. Keep the effort going. Help sustain these and other security efforts once they’re started. This cannot be a quick drill; this is a long-term commitment to the safety and security of our aircraft and airports.



Lock Up.

Security begins with your own aircraft.

Crime usually happens because of opportunity, while terrorism is generally pre-planned and choreographed. Don’t ever make it easy for either. Similar actions can be taken to avoid both crime and terrorism. Always secure your aircraft. Most pilots do this by locking the aircraft’s doors, regardless of whether the aircraft is hangared or tied down outside.

Many owners already use auxiliary locks to further protect their aircraft from unauthorized use. If you don’t, consider how much less expensive it is to add a lock than to have someone steal your



Throttle lock



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

Once your aircraft is locked, take home all your keys—aircraft, hangar, and auxiliary locks. To make it as difficult as possible for someone to gain access to your aircraft, you might want to consider whether you keep your aircraft key on the same key chain as your hangar key. Little changes can make all the difference.

Together, we can make general aviation an unattractive option for terrorists or criminals!

Look Out.

Don't assume someone else reported something first.

First call your local airport management or 911, and back up your report by calling **866-GA-SECURE** (866-427-3287).

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. Be alert, report aircraft with unusual or obviously unauthorized modifications and people or groups who seem determined to keep to themselves.

Details carry weight: “I’m at the Anytown Municipal Airport and just saw [something dangerous] loaded into a tan-and-orange airplane with tail number N1234. 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 approach someone you fear may be about to commit an illegal act or crime. Make some notes, such as the person's appearance, clothing, car license plate, type of aircraft, N number, and coloring. If appropriate, take a picture but keep your distance if the situation seems hostile. If you can't safely contact 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.

**Report suspicious activity:
call 866-GA-SECURE
(866-427-3287)**

*If danger is imminent, call 911 first.
Don't take risks with your own safety!*

Remember: Don't give criminals or terrorists a chance to make your airport or aircraft a target or a weapon. Make access difficult for people who don't belong. Criminals and terrorists won't want to hang around an airport full of people who are alert and aware of their activities.

It's your home field—cover your entire neighborhood!

Some situations require special attention, so here are some tips for handling special situations.

For instructors:

It is important for all instructors to not only teach security but practice it. Teach your students about procedures relating to securing aircraft and then make sure your students see you doing it. Discuss security during flight reviews and aircraft checkouts and secure aircraft after every flight.

Control non-solo students' access to the ignition key until instruction is to begin. You can unlock the aircraft for preflight and keep the ignition key. Encourage your FBO to install an ignition switch that is keyed differently than airframe keys; or allow your student access to the ignition key but install a throttle lock for which you retain the key. Depending on the environment, it might be useful to assign a



special check-in for students (soloed and pre-solo). This is especially useful for younger students.

For FBO rental desks:

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

For agricultural applicators:

Provide airport neighbors and management with a list of all people authorized to access your equipment and their role. 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.

**Protect your freedom to fly—join
AOPA's Airport Watch Program today, and**

Lock Up and Look Out. AOPA's Airport Watch needs you.

America's pilots are on the frontlines of our national and local security. By joining together, we become a powerful network for information about what is happening at our airports. It's just

common sense. We spend time at the airport. We know the people. We know the aircraft.

It is a waste of our time and energy to dig in our heels and act as if the non-flying public and all 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 and terrorist threats 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 866-GA-SECURE (866-427-3287), you will act as part of a community-wide general aviation effort to protect our aircraft, our airports, and our aviation communities.

America's pilots joining together will make a difference.

Lock Up and Look Out. Are you ready to do your share?

Your participation at your local airport will make this program a success. No longer will you have to wonder what you can do to ensure the safety and security of your aircraft, airport, and your continued freedom to fly. No longer will the media legitimately be able to claim general aviation airports are free and open for potential terrorist or criminal activity. Without your help and participation, officials at the national, state, and local level—those who don't love aviation like we do—will impose their own security mandates on our community! So don't let that happen.

Through AOPA's Airport Watch Program, we pilots have the power to reduce or even eliminate the perception that private aircraft pose a significant threat to the public. Protect our flying community, and our freedom to fly, while protecting our non-flying friends and neighbors. Simply protect your aircraft and airport like you do your home and neighborhood!



Use your eyes and ears to keep our airports safe.

Lock Up.

How to be more secure:



- Become familiar with and practice existing airport security procedures.
- Utilize aircraft door locks at all times when the aircraft is unattended.
- Consider the use of auxiliary locks to further protect aircraft from unauthorized use.
- Consistently lock hangar doors and close security gates to prevent unauthorized access or tampering.
- Properly secure ignition keys separate from aircraft.

Look Out.

Here's what to look for:



- Anyone trying to access an aircraft through force—without keys, using a crowbar or screwdriver.
- Anyone unfamiliar with aviation procedures trying to check out an aircraft.
- Anyone who misuses aviation lingo—or seems too eager to use all the lingo.
- People or groups determined to keep to themselves.
- Anyone who appears to be just loitering, with no specific reason for being there.
- Out-of-the-ordinary videotaping of aircraft or hangars.
- Dangerous cargo or loads—explosives, chemicals, openly displayed weapons— being loaded into an aircraft.
- 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.

**When in doubt, check with
airport staff or call
AOPA's Airport Watch at
1-866-GA-SECURE**

866-427-3287



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AOPA's AIRPORT WATCH

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