

Just Do the Right Thing

"Just do the right thing and you won't have any problems." Such was the advice I received from the lead pilot on my very first EMS flying job over 17 years ago. While that is great advice and NEMSPA does its level best to adhere to those words everyday and measure its success against that statement, the consequences can be some-

what brutal at times. Being a little older and, hopefully, a little wiser, I believe that I may be able to quantify those words a little better now than I could then.

Doing the right thing may not necessarily be the easy thing. In many cases standing up for what you believe is right may end up being one of the most difficult things

you've ever done because the right thing is not always popular. In fact, doing the right thing can be met with some amount of resistance and pushback from others. Over the years NEMSPA has strived to measure its success on common sense and safety rather than political correctness or popularity contests.

When NEMSPA's white paper on fatigue, written by Dr. Mark Rosekind, came out at AMTC a few years ago, we were looked upon by some as upsetting the apple cart. Over time, though, this became a huge step forward for our industry in fatigue awareness and the recognition of how dangerous fatigue can be, not only for pilots but also medical teams. Out of that white paper and NEMSPA's work with Dr. Rosekind came a new understanding of how to combat fatigue intelligently.

NEMSPA's survey on night vision goggles got quite a bit of attention from several different sectors of the industry. Not every sector looked upon that survey with the same enthusiasm that we did, but in the end the results proved significantly valuable and positively influenced several decisions made by the FAA on night vision goggle operations.

As in the past some of NEMSPA's latest endeavors have sparked a certain amount of controversy at different levels in certain sectors of our industry. I personally don't believe controversy in and of itself is necessarily a bad thing, but it can prove to be a very fine line to walk when trying to convince others that change is needed. I have been told that I am not very politically correct but I am politically sensitive. According to 1 individual, that means that I do care what others think and do seek council from every possible available source, but at the end of the day, I will make the statement as I see fit and let the chips fall where they may.

With its en-route decision point (EDP) recommendations, NEMSPA is once again attempting to set the bar of safety 1 notch higher for our industry. Even though this has been embraced by many in the industry, it has also been met with some concern and resistance by others. While most agree that this could be a very valuable tool for pilots, some are concerned that NEMSPA is making the statement that HEMS is unsafe. Looking at the statistics provided by the NTSB and HAI, HEMS, when compared to other facets of the industry, has actually achieved a respectable safety record. That being said, NEMSPA believes it can always do better and will continue to push the envelope and not rest on its laurels or become complacent with past achievements. Our hope is that, with continued research and edu-

cation, the EDP process will become a new recognized standard that makes a difference.

More recently, NEMSPA had the opportunity to participate in the writing of a white paper submitted to the FAA as to what we believe is a better and more industry/FAA-inclusive process for rewriting the advisory circular on heliports. The premise for this paper was to advance safety, improve functionality, and increase standardization from an operational and pilot perspective. Some things in the paper may be misconstrued as politically insensitive, and if so, I apologize for any misunderstanding, but at the same time it was the right thing to do.

It is very critical that any statement made on behalf of an organization is carefully reviewed for accuracy and completeness, but political correctness should not be the litmus test for safety. Doing the right thing will more than likely not be all that politically correct in the eyes of some, but you will be able to look yourself in the eye in the mirror every morning. Some people are not willing to do the right thing because, in some cases, the cost is higher than they are prepared to pay. Those costs can be measured in pay, bonuses, jobs, and sometimes friendships. The right thing may cost more than you are prepared to pay, and only you will know if you can live with that decision or not.

- If you do the right thing when no one else is looking, you have a conscience.
- If you're willing to do the right thing when no one else will, you are honorable.
- If you do the right thing, even when everyone around you is telling you not to, you have integrity.
- If you still do the right thing on your worst day, when you are at your lowest and nothing else is going your way, you have significant character.
- If you do the right thing in the face of insurmountable odds when it would be easier to turn away, you possess high moral courage.
- If you are willing to fight for the right thing, even at extreme personal cost to yourself, you are selfless.

Doing the right thing for a friend strengthens relationships; doing the right thing for a complete stranger truly forges friendships. Doing the right thing versus doing the alternative is what separates greatness from mediocrity. So go be great and do the right thing. NEMSPA will meet you at the finish line.

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