

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF THE LANDING SIGNAL OFFICER (LSO)

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I. THINE EYES BELONG IN THE GROOVE

This may be the most difficult law to impress on the new LSO. A multitude of aircraft have been saved long before the ball call. The controlling LSO doesn't have to look at the book or book writer to make his comments, and looking up the deck should be a backup LSO task. Secondly, the 180-90 or CGA portion of the pass undoubtedly affects the pilot's start and may be the true cause of difficulty vice technique once on the ball.

II. THOU SHALT NOT ACCEPT GARBAGE

It has been said that the three greatest killers of naval aviators have been "Pride, Fear and Hurrying." I see this relating to the pilot-LSO team as such: The pilot can salvage any pass, whereas the LSO can successfully wave anyone. The pilot fears the penalty box and his LSO the pressure (real or perceived) to get him aboard. In their haste, the pilot makes the large play in close while his LSO allows waveoff-window creep.

III. THOU SHALT CONSIDER SAFETY ABOVE ALL ELSE

The underlying reason for all we do as LSOs. If you cannot stand the heat from above or below, and you compromise this most important task, you do not belong on the platform.

IV. THY HANDSET SHALL COMFORT THEE

The controlling LSO must never lose situational awareness. Far too many times aircraft emergencies or pilot difficulties are passed by means other than UHF. Those supporting the platform have to be extra eyes and ears. During CQ or flex deck, change controlling LSOs often in order to avoid fatigue. Platform speakers are not that reliable to take a chance at missing valuable information. Keep the handset to your ear!

V. THOU SHALT NOT REDIRECT ATTENTION

The backup LSO's corollary to number I above. Assign another team member to talk on the phone or MC. You are an all-too-important check valve to have your total concentration interrupted.

VI. THOU SHALT NOT PREDICT A CLEAR DECK

We are not in this business to play the odds in a detrimental fashion. Either there are men, equipment

or aircraft in the landing area and we move the waveoff window aft or we wave the aircraft to a normal waveoff point. Back row kibitzers, put away your crystal balls please.

VII. HONOR THY PLATFORM AND EQUIPMENT

All too often LSO equipment problems and malfunctions have found their way into mishap reports, and usually we have only ourselves to blame for its status. Gripe your equipment religiously and follow up on it. Some air wings even use MAFS for this purpose. A word to the phone talker or call to primary just does not hack it. See that a complete MRC deck exists or produce one locally.

VIII. THOU SHALT USE THY TRAINING AIDS

The pickle switch is the best pilot training aid you have at your disposal. Consistent errors or flagrant disregard can strike home more rapidly this way. Motivational strokes, positive or negative, during debriefs are a must. Analyze the pilot, and treat accordingly.

IX. THOU SHALT NOT COVET IGNORANCE

LSOing starts in the readyroom where you not only train your pilots but also ensure an understanding of our hierarchy on the platform:

1. Safety
2. Expeditious recovery
3. Hands-on LSO training
4. Grading

X. THY DILIGENCE IS THY TASK ABOVE ALL OTHERS

As any active participant in aviation, you must always check six and keep your guard up. Being an LSO, not unlike a pilot, is fun, demanding and a rewarding job but you can never lose sight of the fact that lurking out there is someone trying to kill himself, you or both!



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