

conditions as these despite the apparent risk. This time, however, the conditions were forecast with surface fog. Additionally, the pilot and his passenger were in a hurry. They were both late for their respective appointments. Perhaps being in a hurry, the pilot failed to factor in the difference between the forecasted weather and weather he negotiated before. Can it be said that the pilot was in a hurry definitively? Two years before this accident, the pilot landed a different aircraft gear up. At that incident, he simply told the fixed-base operator (FBO) at the airport to take care of the aircraft because the pilot needed to go to a meeting. He also had an enforcement action for flying low over a populated area.

It is apparent that this pilot knew the difference between right and wrong. He elected to ignore the magnitude of the hazard, the final illustration of a behavioral problem that ultimately caused this accident. Certainly one would say that he was impetuous and had what is called “get there itis.” While ducking under clouds to get into the Michigan airport, the pilot struck terrain killing everyone onboard. His erroneous behavior resulted from inadequate or incorrect perceptions of the risk, and his skills, knowledge, and judgment were not sufficient to manage the risk or safely complete the tasks in that aircraft. [Figure 1-6]

The hazards a pilot faces and those that are created through adverse attitude predispose his or her actions. Predisposition is formed from the pilot’s foundation of beliefs and, therefore, affects all decisions he or she makes. These are called “hazardous attitudes” and are explained in the Pilot’s Handbook of Aeronautical Knowledge, Chapter 17, Aeronautical Decision-Making.

A key point must be understood about risk. Once the situation builds in complexity, it exceeds the pilot’s capability and requires luck to succeed and prevail. [Figure 1-7]

Unfortunately, when a pilot survives a situation above his or her normal capability, perception of the risk involved and of the ability to cope with that level of risk become skewed. The pilot is encouraged to use the same response to the same perceived level of risk, viewing any success as due to skill, not luck. The failure to accurately perceive the risk involved and the level of skill, knowledge, and abilities required to mitigate that risk may influence the pilot to accept that level of risk or higher levels.

Many in the aviation community would ask why the pilot did not see this action as a dangerous maneuver. The aviation community needs to ask questions and develop answers to these questions: “What do we need to do during the training and education of pilots to enable them to perceive these hazards as risks and mitigate the risk factors?” “Why was this



Figure 1-6. Each pilot may have a different threshold where skill is considered, however; in this case no amount of skill raises this line to a higher level.

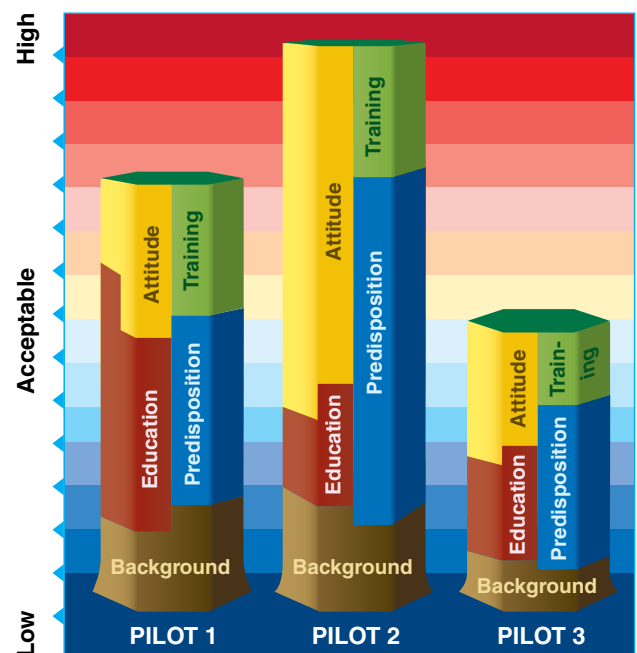


Figure 1-7. Pilots accept their own individual level of risk even though they may have received similar training. Risk, which must be managed individually, becomes a problem when a situation builds and its complexity exceeds the pilot’s capability (background + education + predisposition + attitude + training). The key to managing risk is the pilot’s understanding of his or her threshold and perceptions of the risk.