



2024 Glider Accident Review

NESA Spring Safety Meeting

April 5, 2025

Dr. Gerald A Smith, DMD, CFIG



A few words about intent and methodology...



Primary Sources are NTSB
database



NTSB Recommends 68 Bridges in U.S. be Evaluated for Risk From Vessel Strike

Safety issues identified as part of Francis Scott Key Bridge investigation

Chairman Homendy testifies before Senate on the DCA Midair Collision

NTSB Determines Cause of \$4.5 Million Terminal Cargo Crane Damage in South Carolina

Celsius Nicosia 106.0 ft

Stevens 1471 70.0 ft

Search Investigation and Recommendation Data (CAROL Query Tool)

[Search CAROL](#)

Search for Investigation Case Materials in Our Dockets

[Search Dockets](#)

Pilots & Public Safety Agencies: Report a Transportation Accident or a TCAS Resolution Advisory

[Report an Accident](#)

Who We Are and What We Do

Welcome to CAROL

CAROL is NTSB's query tool for information about investigations and recommendations.



Select a search type below to get started.



Basic Investigation & Recommendation Search

Create a basic search using select fields. Includes all NTSB recommendations (1967-present) and data from all NTSB aviation investigations (1962-present) and surface mode investigations (highway, marine, railroad, pipeline, and hazmat) from 2010-present.



Aviation Investigation Search

Create a more specific search using aviation fields. Includes aviation investigation data from 1962-present.



Custom Search Builder

Create a custom search using a combination of investigation and/or recommendation data fields.



Published Searches

View published searches of recommendations or investigations covering specific issue areas. Published searches show dynamic data reflecting current information each time you open them.



For assistance conducting searches, contact data@ntsb.gov.

For assistance with or questions about CAROL, contact safiti@ntsb.gov.

Additional Resources

[NTSB Monthly Aviation](#)[NTSB Downloadable](#)[NTSB Statistical](#)[NTSB Research](#)

The NTSB aviation accident database contains civil aviation accidents and selected incidents that occurred from 1962 to present within the United States, its territories and possessions, and in international waters. Foreign investigations in which the NTSB participated as an accredited representative will also be listed.

Help

Accident/Incident Information

Event Start Date (mm/dd/yyyy) 01/01/2024

Event End Date (mm/dd/yyyy) 12/31/2024

Month All

City

State Anywhere

Country Anywhere

Event Type All

Highest Injury Level All

Aircraft

Category

- Glider
- All
- Airplane
- Balloon
- Blimp
- Commercial Space Flight
- Glider**
- Gyroplane
- Helicopter
- Powered-Lift
- Powered parachute
- Rocket
- Ultralight
- Unknown
- Unmanned
- Weight-Shift

Number of Engines

Engine Type All



CAROL Landing Page

Basic Search

Custom Search

Published Searches

1

Page size: 50

22 items in 1 pages

NTSB#	Public Docket	Event Date	Location	Report	Original Published Date	Event Type	Highest Injury	Aircraft Details	Status	Has Safety Rec
ERA25FA066		12/06/2024	Vero Beach, Florida	Prelim PDF		Accident	Fatal	N244RW: SCHLEICHER / ASW24	In work	✗
ERA25LA064		11/20/2024	Centralhatchee, Georgia	Prelim PDF		Accident	Serious	N17GF: AMS FLIGHT D O O / CARAT A	In work	✗
WPR25LA015		10/11/2024	Moriarty, New Mexico	Prelim PDF		Accident	None	N41FL: GLASFLUGE / STANDARD LIBELLE	In work	✗
ERA25LA009		10/06/2024	Front Royal, Virginia	Prelim PDF		Accident	Minor	N341KS: SCHLEICHER / ASK-21	In work	✗
CEN24LA331	Docket	09/01/2024	Kingman, Kansas	Final PDF	10/22/2024	Accident	None	N133LB: LET / L 33 SOLO	Completed	✗
ERA24FA362	Docket	08/30/2024	Waynesville, Ohio	Final PDF	4/1/2025	Accident	Fatal	N264JM: SCHLEICHER ALEXANDER GMBH & CO / ASH 26 E	Completed	✗
WPR24LA274	Docket	08/09/2024	Minden, Nevada	Final PDF	2/27/2025	Accident	None	N125CC: BURKHART GROB FLUGZEUGE / G103 TWIN	Completed	✗

What is an Accident vs Incident?

Aircraft accident means an occurrence associated with the operation of an aircraft which takes place between the time any person boards the aircraft with the intention of flight and all such persons have disembarked, and in which any person suffers death or serious injury, or in which the aircraft receives substantial damage.

Incident means an occurrence other than an accident, associated with the operation of an aircraft, which affects or could affect the safety of operations.

Reported to NTSB, not FAA

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NEWS

NTSB Updates Accident Reporting System

Direct digital submission now possible.



MEG GODLEWSKI Updated Apr 1, 2025 2:05 PM EDT



The NTSB has replaced the lengthy PDF that had to be emailed with a secure online portal. [Shutterstock/T. Schneider]

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49 CFR PART 830—NOTIFICATION AND REPORTING OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENTS OR INCIDENTS AND OVERDUE AIRCRAFT, AND PRESERVATION OF AIRCRAFT WRECKAGE, MAIL, CARGO, AND RECORDS

§ 830.1 Applicability.

§ 830.2 Definitions.

Subpart B—Initial Notification of Aircraft Accidents, Incidents, and Overdue Aircraft

§ 830.5 Immediate notification.

§ 830.6 Information to be given in notification.

Subpart C—Preservation of Aircraft Wreckage, Mail, Cargo, and Records

§ 830.10 Preservation of aircraft wreckage, mail, cargo, and records.

Subpart D—Reporting of Aircraft Accidents, Incidents, and Overdue Aircraft

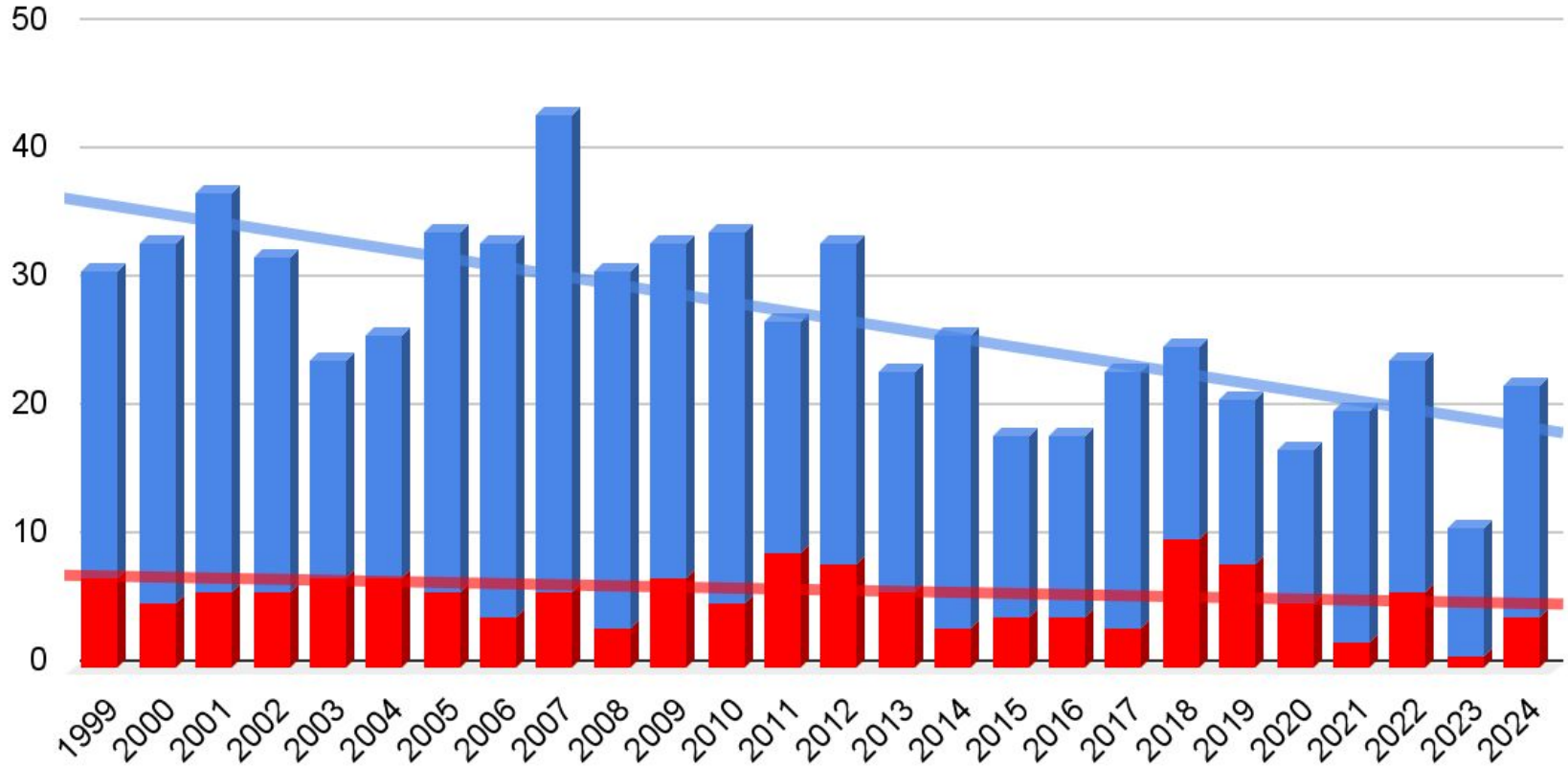
§ 830.15 Reports and statements to be filed.

In 2024 22 total glider accidents reported to the NTSB

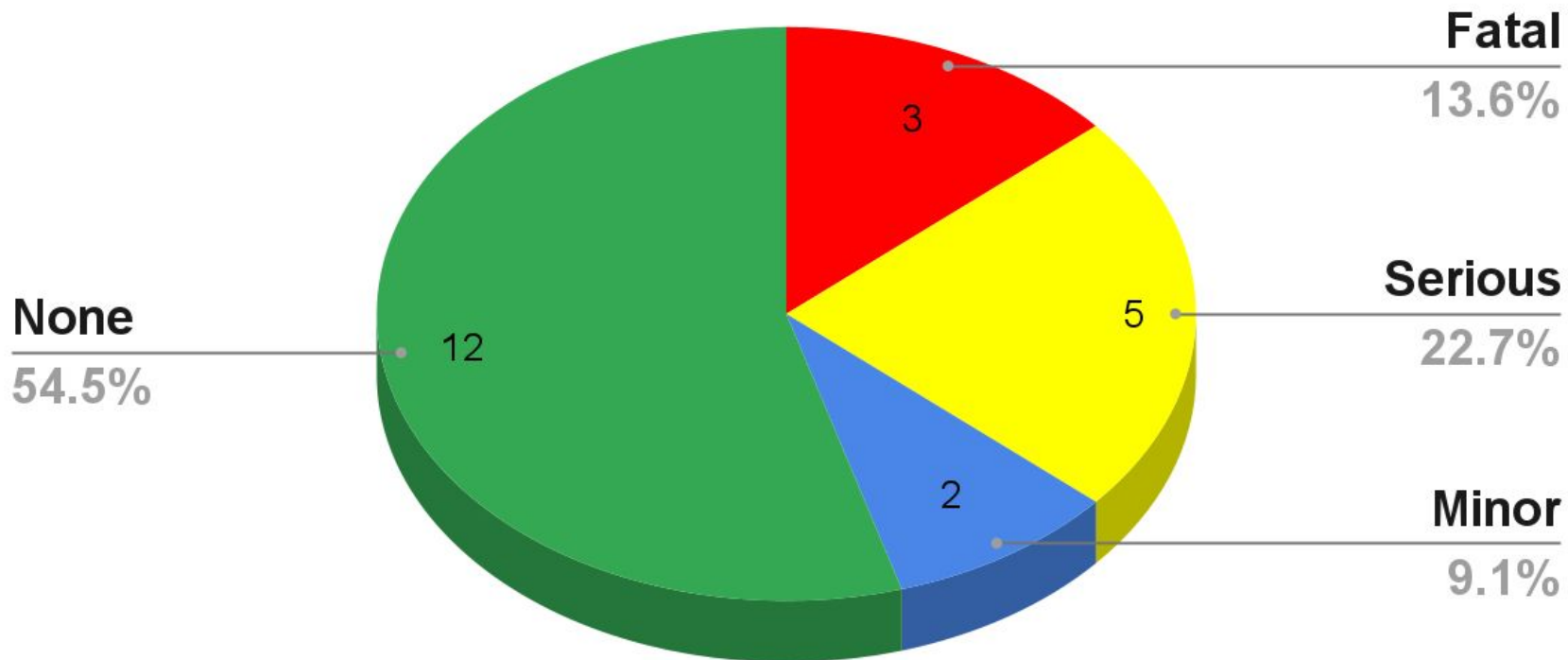
3 of which resulted in fatalities

25 Year Glider Data: Total Accidents vs Fatalities

■ Non-Fatal — trendlines ■ Fatal Accidents — trendlines



2024 Glider Accidents: Highest Injury Level



2024 Accidents by Phase of Flight

Mid Air

4.5%

CFIT

4.5%

Unknown

13.6%

Off Airport

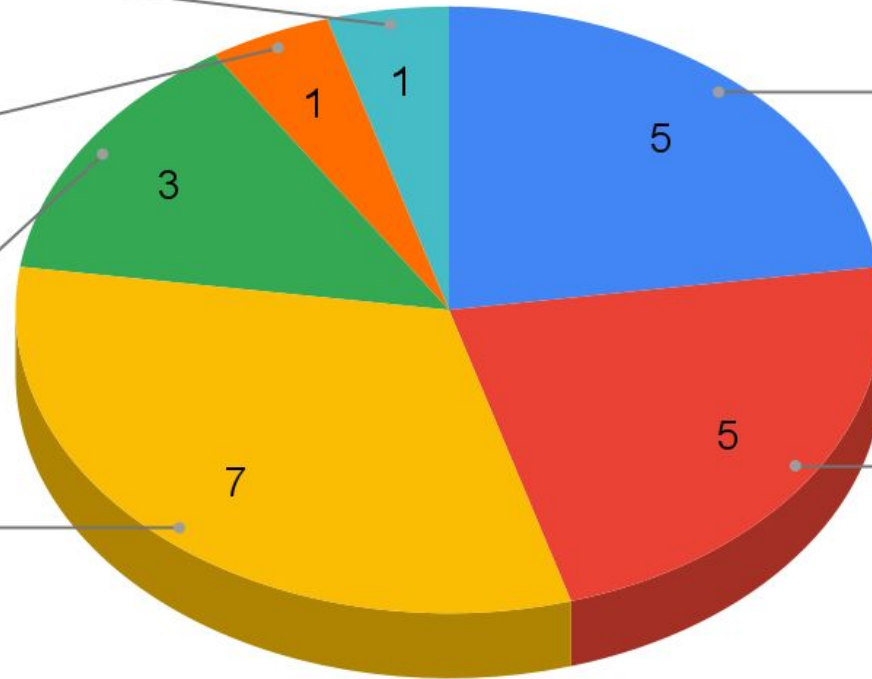
31.8%

T/O/PTT

22.7%

Landing

22.7%



Weather

Only 1 involved significant weather; this had no injuries.

Off airport landing elected as weather deteriorated with blowing desert wind/sand in a light glider (Libelle) Winds were 22G31 kts nearby.

All the rest of the accidents occurred in what we'd consider good/reasonable soaring weather.



Phase of Flight: Take off/ PTT

Take Off/ Premature Termination of Tow

1. Automobile tow of a 2-33 utilizing a CG hook; rolled left and contacted ground
2. Motorglider engine failure on T/O; overshot RW landed in hilly terrain
3. Homebuilt Motorglider engine failure on T/O stall/spin - Fatal
4. Normal T/O until about 150' AGL "radical pitch up" stall/spin - Fatal

Take Off/ Premature Termination of Tow

5. Towplane lost power on T/O roll, landed straight ahead glider didn't release and rope pulled glider into ground.

<https://data.nts.gov/Docket/Document/docBLOB?ID=17622158&FileExtension=MOV&FileName=381A6716-9966-447C-8FDF-9B73B51C374E-Rel.MOV>

Take Away Thoughts

Takeoffs are optional...

The release is your friend if ANY abnormalities

Checklists for assembling and pre takeoffs

Consider Emergency plan for runway/winds

Can all controls be easily reached and activated?



Phase of Flight: Mid-Air Collision

Mid-Air

Pilot 1 only saw glider 1.5 seconds prior to impact tried to turn away but raised wing struck. This glider had FLARM

Pilot 2 never saw the other glider until wings struck

Both maintained controllability and landed safely.



- Pipistrel Glider with Damaged Left Wing (Courtesy of FAA)



Phase of Flight: Landing

Phase of Flight: Landing/Off Airport

Often the reports begin with “encountered heavy sink”

Arrived at intended landing airport lower than expected

Or forced to use alternate landing surface

Phase of Flight: Landing

1. Unstable Approach/Indecision
2. Gusty conditions, narrow runway wing struck tall grass
3. Forgot to dump H2O (rarely flew with ballast) got too slow for weight landed hard
4. Witness stated glider appeared too slow, stalled/spin recovered about 50' AGL then abruptly pitched up and stalled - Fatal

Phase of Flight: Landing - Off Airport

1. Struck fence post
2. Struck rock
3. 2 instances of Motor Gliders- not enough altitude to start motors; forced landing
4. Motorglider under power engine quit after 1 hr, forced landing flipped over
5. Desert sandstorm
6. Fixated on a tree in approach path stalled

Phase of Flight: Landing

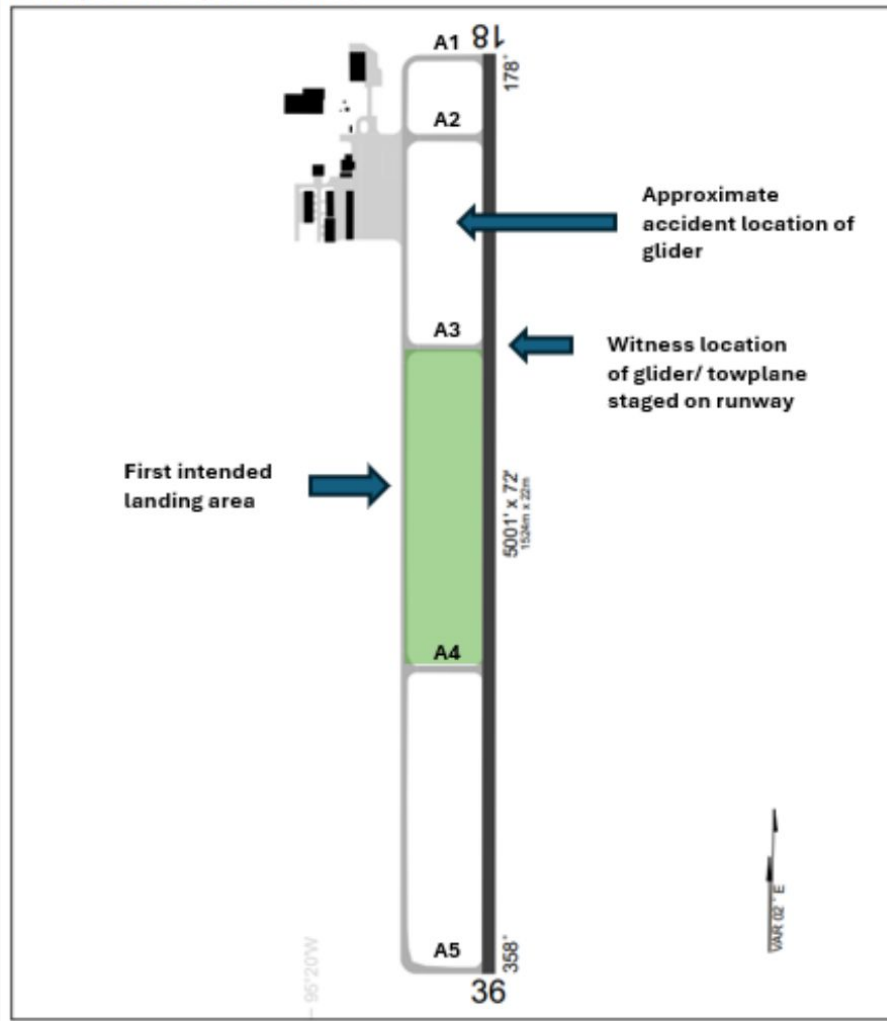
Student pilot about 25 glider hours

Landing runway 18 winds 210@12 G 22

Staged glider on RW 18 approx 1,500 ft from beginning

Set up for landing on turf adjacent to RW; Instructor in staged glider radioed to “land short” This created confusion in landing student’s mind

H71: MID-AMERICA INDUSTRIAL
PRYOR, OKLAHOMA, UNITED STATES



H71

https://www.google.com/maps/@36.2261614,-95.3307455,1719m/data=!3m1!1e3?entry=tту&g_ep=EgoyMDI1MDMzMS4wIKXMDS0JLDEwMjExNDUzSAFQAw%3D%3D

CFIT

Very close to home, a good friend of NESAs

Had a good soaring flight but lift subsided and he headed home

Struck a tree on hill and “landed” about 30 ft above the ground in the trees

About 5 hours until first responders located him.



Photograph 1 - Drone image of glider in tree canopy (Courtesy of FAA)



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Take Away Thoughts

Are you arriving with enough reserve to land at the airport?

Careful evaluation of alternate landing sites

Awareness of obstacles?

Is your final touchdown speed proper?

Take Away Thoughts...

Hone your landing skills with an instructor.

Practice “alternative” patterns: right patterns, abbreviated patterns;

Practice minimum energy touchdowns and maximum performance stops.

Should you be involved in an “event”...

Emergency care/safety

Review the NTSB requirements(49 CFR Part 830) make reports if required

File “NASA” Report

Contact a flight instructor or a FAAsteam Rep to discuss the event

Get dual instruction with an instructor

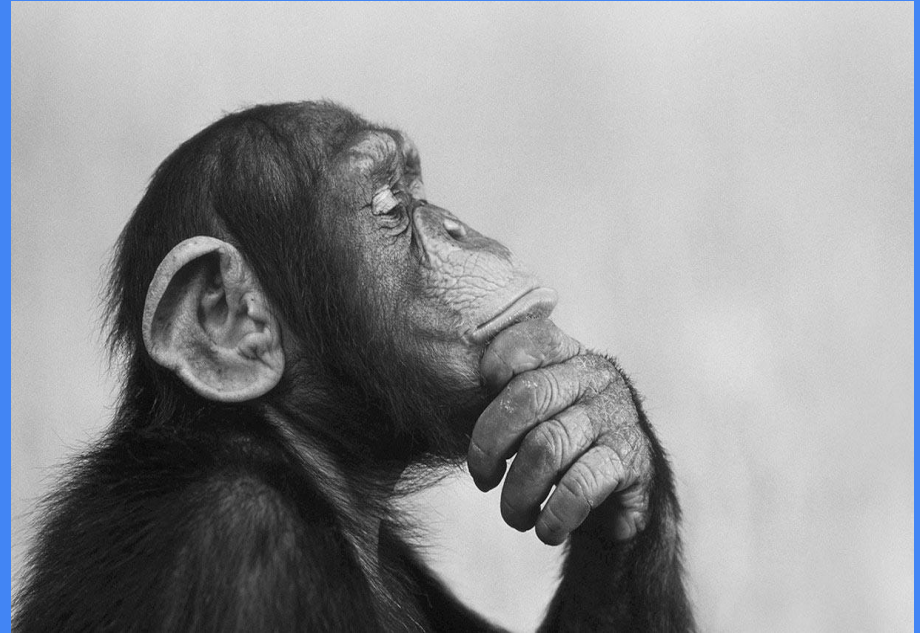
We are all human...

Any one of us is capable of making mistakes and having a bad day.



Before you fly

Please Think...



Questions?

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