



Aviation Human Factors Industry News

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AMT Day Passes House!

*Aircraft Maintenance Technicians
Association*

On May 1, in Congress HRES #444 was introduced and approved by a **voice vote!** On Monday Ken MacTiernan will meet with Congressman Bob Filner along with Maryanne DeMarco to personally thank Congressman Filner for introducing the **National AMT Day Resolution** on behalf of the Aircraft Maintenance Technicians Association (AMTA) and all **AMTs**.



"I wish to thank everyone who called their Congressman for their support in voting for this important resolution," MacTiernan said. "Next will be our efforts to have **the Senate** introduce their version of a National AMT Day Resolution. I will keep everyone apprised of the status on this endeavor."

H. Res. 444: supporting the goals and ideals of National Aviation Maintenance Technician Day, honoring the invaluable contributions of Charles Edward Taylor, regarded as the father of aviation maintenance, and recognizing the essential role of **aviation maintenance technicians** in ensuring the safety and security of civil and military aircraft.

Time Pressure Situation: Aviation Safety Reporting System

ASRS continues to receive **valuable safety suggestions** from the **maintenance community**. We'd like to share a recent submission that highlights the importance of both visual and procedural "markers" for the completion of maintenance tasks.



- I was assigned to perform the #9 A Check on the engine of an **A-320**. I followed the job card procedures, which require the deactivation of the hydraulic thrust reverser control unit by installing a **safety pin** in the control unit. While I continued with the engine service, I found a couple of discrepancies that would need to be addressed... As time passed, it was near to push-out and run the engines for leak checks. It was at this point **I became rushed** and missed reactivating the thrust reverser hydraulic control unit...



I did not realize my **mistake** until I was on my way home and the aircraft was already airborne. At once I called the station maintenance controller and explained the problem... I learned the next day that the aircraft landed safely at its destination, but that the #1 engine thrust reverser did not deploy, resulting in diminished stopping capability.

Aside from obviously paying more attention to my work, it would have been **helpful if a remove-before-flight streamer was installed** on the deactivation pin of the control unit. I would likely have seen the streamer prior to closing the fan cowls.

ASRS learned in a callback to this reporter that he had followed maintenance instructions on a job card for the thrust reverser lockout procedure. The job card directed the technician to install the lockout pin on the reverser, **but did not direct removal of the pin** – instead, it instructed the technician to "restore aircraft to normal." Nor did it require an operational check of the thrust reverser. The **absence of explicit instructions** for completing the job deprived the technician of a memory jogger that apparently was much needed in the **time-pressure situation** involved.



Community service for helicopter crash manslaughter

The Robinson R22 ZK-HVN crashed near Murchison in 2005. Photo.

An aircraft maintenance company owner and senior engineer were today **sentenced to 300 hours' community work** each for the manslaughter of a pilot in a helicopter crash.



Father-of-nine Philip Heney was killed when a **tail component failed** while landing his Robinson R22 helicopter near Murchison, southwest of Nelson, in August 2005.

John Horrell, 56, and Ronald Potts, 60, were found guilty in the High Court at Nelson in March of Mr. Heney's manslaughter and causing injury to a passenger.

The crash occurred near Mr. Heney's home on the day he collected the helicopter from Skytech Aviation where it had undergone maintenance.

Horrell had owned the company and Potts worked for Skytech as a licensed aircraft maintenance engineer.

Investigators found the Robinson R22 crashed when an **incorrectly assembled flange**, connecting the tail rotor driveshaft, failed.

The Crown had said at the trial that the defendants **failed to ensure work on the helicopter was directly supervised by a licensed aircraft maintenance engineer and inspected twice by qualified engineers.**

The R22's tail assembly was put together by **unlicensed engineers** and only checked by Potts through an inspection aperture "the size of a \$2 coin".

Horrell's counsel, Philip Morgan QC, said it was not up to Horrell to tell a licensed engineer when to inspect maintenance work. That was up to the engineer and the person doing the work.

Horrell had a process in place to ensure unlicensed engineers were supervised, **but could not be expected to judge** if the supervision was adequate.

Potts' counsel Pip Hall said the tragic accident was the result of **human error**, and not deliberate criminal offending.

At today's sentencing, Horrell was ordered to pay \$25,000 and Potts \$10,000 in compensation to Mr. Heney's family and his hunting partner Hamish Teddy who was injured in the crash.

FAA mandates A320 stabilizer inspections

The US Federal Aviation Administration has finalized an airworthiness directive (AD) first proposed in October, calling on operators of 721 US-registered Airbus A320- family aircraft to perform a one-time inspection of the aircraft's trimmable horizontal stabilizer actuator (THSA).



The AD resulted from multiple operators discovering and reporting **incorrect THSA installation** while complying with an Airbus service bulletin.

According to the FAA, the **faulty installation** “could lead to a degradation of the integrity of the THSA primary load path”, that could result in uncontrolled movement of the horizontal stabilizer “and loss of control of the aircraft.” The AD calls for operators within 600 flight hours or 750 flight cycles from 6 June to perform a one-time detailed visual inspection of the lower and the upper THSA attachments for **correct installation** and for the presence of metallic particles.

The FAA earlier this week proposed a somewhat similar AD for Boeing 737s following a Boeing design review and safety analysis of the horizontal trim units on all its aircraft. The review followed the January 2000 loss of an Alaska Airlines MD-83 and all 88 passengers and crew after the failure of the horizontal stabilizer trim assembly due to an **improperly lubricated jackscrew**.

Northwest Airlines, through comments submitted by the Air Transport Association, had requested that the FAA reconsider issuing the AD. “NWA agrees that an incorrectly installed THSA could be a safety concern, but asserts that accomplishing a one time inspection will **not prevent improper** THSA installations in the future, and does not understand what corrective action is being taken (or should be taken) to prevent similar installation problems in the future.” Though it did not agree that the AD should be withdrawn, the FAA did state that “Airbus has informed us that the **maintenance instructions have been revised** and clarified to **prevent confusion** during any future installation of the THSA.”

Three Dead, Three Injured In Possible Runway Incursion Accident At MYL

Landing Cessna 172 Collided With Another On Runway

Investigators sift through the wreckage of two small planes that collided at the McCall Airport last Friday

The Federal Aviation Administration is investigating the collision of two Cessna 172s at McCall Municipal Airport (MYL) in central Idaho last Friday night.

FAA spokesman Ian Gregor told KTVB-7 at approximately 1900 MDT, the landing Cessna with two people aboard struck another Cessna, with four people aboard, that had reportedly taken the runway. Both aircraft exploded upon impact.



Pilot Bill Keating, 52, and two of his grandsons, ages one and six died at the scene. All three were aboard the aircraft on the ground.

Another grandson, age two, was flown to the University of Utah Burn Center with third-degree burns where he is listed in critical condition. The pilot of the other aircraft, Justin Mooney, 30 and passenger Mark Fuller, 27 saved the two-year-old from the burning plane. Both were treated and released from McCall Memorial Hospital, according to USA Today.

"We are still trying to figure out the circumstances behind the crash," said Gregor Saturday to the Idaho Press-Tribune. "We know that Mr. Mooney's aircraft took off from Felts Field in Spokane headed for McCall Municipal Airport. Upon landing it collided with a second Cessna 172, and the **two planes exploded on impact.**"

According to KTVB, Keating left the airport at Caldwell, ID with his three grandchildren an hour prior to the collision at McCall.

NTSB investigator Dennis Hogenson arrived mid-Saturday to begin investigation in the cause of the accident. "Our job is putting the pieces together," Hogenson said. "We've been told a number of things. We have witnesses and we have a pilot who has been very forthcoming and helpful. "We need to figure out what came first ... were they airborne, side-by-side? We just don't know yet."

"This is a tragedy in a very small community," Hogenson further said. "We obviously have some devastated relatives, and Sunday two colleagues who work in our transportation disaster assistance program will work with me to make sure families and the community have everything they need. A lot of people in this valley knew the pilot, and we have small children involved."

Danger On the Ground

Something is seriously wrong with U.S. aviation when the **greatest danger occurs** not in the air **but on the ground**. Runway collisions and near misses are far too common, despite decades of warnings and calls for safety improvements - and despite the belief that current technology could significantly reduce the risk.

Congress and the Bush administration need to find out why the danger persists and what steps should be taken to make runways safer.



In the six months that ended March 30, The New York Times reported last month, there were 15 serious "runway incursions," compared with eight in the same period a year ago. An incursion involves the unauthorized presence of a plane, vehicle or pedestrian on a runway.

TOO COMPLEX AND EXPENSIVE

Solving runway incursions has been on the National Transportation Safety Board's "**most wanted list**" of safety improvements since 1990.

Since 2000, the NTSB called for a collision warning system that would alert pilots directly, rather than tower controllers, but the Federal Aviation Administration says such a system would be too complex and expensive.

The FAA has taken steps such as improved lighting and signs on the ground, but the deadly risk remains:

In March 2000, four people died at Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport as two small planes collided on a runway.

The last airliner crash in the United States, in August 2006 in Lexington, Ky., was a runway incursion caused by the crew trying to take off on the wrong runway. Forty-nine of 50 people on board were killed.

Just two months ago, on March 2, three people were killed at an airport in Titusville when a small plane trying to land crashed into another taxiing to a ramp area.

GPS HAS MORE INFORMATION

Runway collisions are almost always caused by **human error**, The Times' Matthew L. Wald noted, but the number could be greatly reduced through **available technology**, from pavement paint to electronic warning systems.

Airliners and many smaller planes, for instance, have navigation systems based on Global Positioning System satellites that can locate them while in the air but are not usually linked to surface maps that could locate them by taxiway and runway.

"If you've got a GPS in your car, you have **infinitely more detailed information** than in the cockpit of an airplane on the ground" at Kennedy International Airport, Randy Babbitt, a former president of the Air Line Pilots Association, told The Times.

Congress and the administration should determine what it will take - other than an airliner collision and a major loss of life -to make sure the nation's runways are safe.

Pilot Forgets to Lower Wheels, Crashes \$136 Million U.K. Fighter Jet

A Royal Air Force **top gun** crash-landed a new \$136.3 million Typhoon fighter - **apparently after forgetting to put the wheels down** during a training exercise in California. The state-of-the-art jet was badly damaged as it skidded along a runway on its belly at 130 mph. "Everything points to the pilot forgetting to lower the wheels, which does happen from time to time," an RAF insider said.

Another possible cause of the accident is landing gear failure - but none of the other 48 Typhoons in service has been grounded with such a problem. The top gun and his co-pilot from 17 Squadron climbed unhurt from the 1,500-mph jet.

They were taking part in a major war games exercise at China Lake air base in California where aircraft can train with live weapons because of the remote location. The mangled jet will be brought back to Britain to see if it can be repaired.



First Fatal T-38 Crashes In Years Prompt Stand Down

Two fatal accidents in nine days **snapped five years of fatality-free operations** for the Air Force's T-38C trainer and have now grounded the aircraft. An April 23 crash and a May 1 crash **together claimed four pilots**. The Air Force has so far offered few details, offering Thursday that the accidents so far appear unrelated. "Until we have a more complete understanding of the causes," said General William Looney, commander of Air Education and Training Command (AETC), "it's prudent to stand down the T-38's." AETC will observe a **"safety day"** Monday, leaving all its aircraft on the ground. The April 23 crash occurred on takeoff at Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi, killing Maj. Blair Faulkner and 2nd Lt. Matthew Emmons. The May 1 crash killed two more pilots whose names had not yet been released. Those pilots -- a student and instructor -- were flying a training mission out of Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls.



The jet crashed short of the runway at Sheppard, according to local news, temporarily closing Wichita Falls Municipal airport (the airport shares a runway with the base). The T-38 has been used to train military pilots since 1961.

No more outsourcing maintenance, says BTC

Contending that we're in the midst of what it terms "an unprecedented convergence of problems with airline safety and Federal Aviation Administration oversight," the Business Travel Coalition is calling for Congress to **mandate a moratorium on outsourced airline maintenance**.

Citing recent revelations from Congressional testimony, BTC Chairman Kevin Mitchell contends: "there are systemic problems at FAA that can only be remedied by a top-to-bottom review of the agency." Mitchell maintains this review should be followed, "by implementation of fundamental reforms".

His logic behind the call for the moratorium is the need to restore confidence fully "in the ability of FAA to oversee domestic U.S. airlines' maintenance programs, as well as domestic and **foreign aircraft facilities'** programs".

A day after the Business Travel Coalition's call for fundamental changes at the Federal Aviation Administration, the group asked President Bush to remove immediately the agency's acting administrator, Robert Sturgell.



BTC went further and asked the president to “consider the removal of other top FAA officials involved with the growing commercial air services calamity that is grid-locking the nation”.

While not responding specifically to BTC’s criticism, one top FAA official - Associate Administrator for Aviation Safety Nicholas A. Sabatini - told a Senate committee last week that aviation safety is better than it has ever been. Sabatini told senators that immediately after World War II, there were some 1,500 fatalities per 100 million miles flown. By the early 1960s, that figure was 500 fatalities per 100 million. By the mid-1990s, the number had plummeted to 45 fatalities per 100 million persons flown. Now it's at between five and eight fatalities for every 100 million persons flown “and we fully expect,” contends the FAA's safety chief, “to reach long-term rates of four or fewer fatalities per 100 million persons flown over the next decade”.

It's context that Sabatini considers critical. “By comparing that level of safety to where we were just 20 years ago, or even a decade ago, we begin to set some sense of scale **on how safe the system has become.**” And, he contends, “it will only continue to get better in the long run”.

Critics are not nearly so sure about that last assertion. That's why some of them want fundamental changes at FAA.

Glove Light by Mechanix Wear

Hard work doesn’t stop when the sun goes down. The washable Original Glove Light with a **super bright, built-in LED** is perfect for low or no-light situations. With waterproof electronics, easy to replace batteries and a seven-minute automatic shut-off, the Original Glove Light will keep you working well into the night.

<http://garage.mechanix.com/detail.aspx?ID=8>



HIGH on Safety Medical Organization Adopts Aviation Methods to Reduce Errors

When Gary L. Sculli left his job as a Northwest Airlines pilot to return to his earlier career, nursing, he experienced a culture shock.

The airlines have **created a culture that promotes safety**, but the health care industry is far behind, he said.



Now, Sculli travels around the country telling health care workers how to use **aviation safety concepts** to prevent medication errors and other slip-ups from injuring or killing patients.

The 43-year-old with close-cropped gray hair promotes a philosophy adopted from his own experience. He says health care workers must **learn to catch mistakes or reduce harm once errors have happened, because eliminating them is impossible.**

"Wherever humans are functioning, wherever humans are interacting and working, **there always will be errors,**" said Sculli.

When he's not appearing as a paid consultant or unpaid speaker, he's applying **aviation safety practices** at his current job as nurse manager of a 40-bed unit at Baptist Memorial Hospital-Memphis.

Sculli's background is a big asset to his colleagues in the hospital and throughout the Baptist system, said Beverly Jordan, the system's vice president and chief nursing officer.

Nurses in Sculli's unit are now using **checklists**, an airline staple. One checklist used in shift-change meetings reminds the head nurse to tell everyone on staff about **factors that can lead to errors**, such as patients with similar names.

Sculli is unusual because he has worked both as a pilot and as a nurse. But his interest in bringing **aviation safety practices** into health care is common.



LifeWings Partners LLC, a Memphis consulting company, pursues the same goal.

Health care workers want to imitate commercial aviation because it's extremely safe: No one died in a commercial airline accident in the United States in 2007.

By contrast, a 1999 report by the Institute of Medicine estimated that **medical errors killed between 44,000 and 98,000 Americans each year.**

One reason the airline industry is so safe is that it's hard to ignore a plane crash, said Dr. Paul Tang, an expert on medical information systems in Palo Alto, Calif., who has worked closely with the Institute of Medicine.

"Their mistakes are so visible," he said. "Every time an aircraft goes down, it's reported in all the news media."

But the person who commits a medical error may not know it happened, he said.

Since the 1999 report, health care organizations have worked to improve safety, but change hasn't come overnight, said Christine Stencel, a spokeswoman for the Institute of Medicine.

"We are really talking about major reforms in a massive system that's both public and private," she said. **"It just takes time."**

Originally from Philadelphia, Sculli was interested in airplanes and science when he was growing up.

He earned a bachelor's degree in nursing, joined the U.S. Air Force and worked as a nurse at Lackland Air Force Base near San Antonio.

A turning point came when he met a military pilot being treated at the facility. Conversations revived his old interest in flying, he said, and he pursued a career change, taking flying lessons and earning certifications.

In 1995, he took a job as a pilot for Northwest Airlink, which flies smaller planes on feeder routes. In 2000, he joined Northwest Airlines, flying a DC-9.

But after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the airline industry slowed down and Sculli was laid off. He worked as an instructor for Methodist Healthcare -- earned a master's degree in nursing administration -- and took his current position with Baptist in August 2006.

After years of being a pilot, Sculli says he **quickly noticed differences between the industry cultures**. In medicine, doctors have traditionally ruled, leaving nurses and others often anxious about speaking up.

That can lead to disaster.

Sculli cites the United Airlines crash on Dec. 28, 1978, in Portland, Ore.

A federal investigation later concluded that the low-ranking crew members didn't tell the captain there was little fuel left. **Instead of communicating directly**, they dropped hints as the pilot circled the runway. The engines failed and 10 people died.

After that, the airlines set about empowering low-level workers. In health care, Sculli said, it's important to **create a culture** where pointing out problems is accepted.

Sculli applied another aviation principle last year when he asked nurses to put on a vest labeled **"Do not disturb"** when preparing patient medications. The goal? **Reduce distractions** in critical moments, much as pilots do, he said.

The study lasted six months, and Sculli hopes to do another to gather more data.

Sculli misses flying. He has turned down a chance to return to the airlines because it would place too much strain on his wife and young children. Besides, he believes his work is worthwhile.

"I feel I can make a bigger impact in nursing," he said.

Airing out errors

Aviation safety concepts easily applied to health care:

Verification: In critical processes, a second person checks to ensure that the first does the work correctly.

Empower all team members: Even the least-educated and lowest-ranking members are expected to speak up if they see a safety hazard.

Reduce distractions: At critical moments, idle chatter and other distractions are banned.

AUDIO SAFETY TALKS!

Your commute can be the **most dangerous** part of your workday. Consider the number of incidents that you've seen in your workplace (hopefully zero) versus the number of traffic accidents you see on your drive to work. Whether they're fender-benders or real rollovers, all traffic accidents cause lost time, and many cause much more serious damage, such as injuries and deaths. This safety talk can help make your commute, and your workers', a little bit safer.

[To listen to the talk, click this link](#)



Driving Adds Up - One Safe Mile At A Time!

Our driving **habits** are influenced by the way we think when we are behind the wheel. Eighty-five to ninety-five percent of motor vehicle accidents are caused by **driver error - your error**.

To be an **accident-free driver** you must always be aware of what is happening around you. Drive defensively by thinking and planning ahead. That way you will see trouble before you are involved in it. This will allow you time to avoid the problem.



[Here are some tips to help improve your driving skills:](#)

- Keep your vehicle in **good repair** with regular checkups and servicing.
- Do a **circle check** before you start to drive. Make sure the vehicle is in good condition, windows are free of obstructions such as dirt or ice, the tires are properly inflated and all lights and signals are working properly. Also make sure that there is nothing (and nobody!) you could hit when you start to drive away.
- **Drive defensively** and always watch out for the other guy.
- Keep your **eyes moving** at all times and don't stare fixedly at an object. Check your **rear view mirror** every few seconds.
- **Look ahead** - at least one city block when driving at city speeds and several city blocks when traveling at highway speeds.

- Follow the **two second-rule** to allow yourself space to see and react. As the vehicle directly ahead of you passes a stationary object, count to yourself - one thousand and one, one thousand and two. Your vehicle should not pass the same object until you say the word "two". This is the minimum distance that you should place between yourself and another moving vehicle. At night, in the rain or snow, increase your following time to four or more seconds.
- When another driver is tailgating you, **don't speed up**. Give yourself plenty of space ahead to react. Don't let a bad driver push you into making a mistake.
- Always **leave yourself room** to maneuver: front, rear and sides. A bicycle rider could shoot out into your path. A person in a parked car could open a door into traffic. The driver beside you on the expressway might not see you as he changes lanes to avoid another automobile or an animal.
- At a four-way stop, try to establish **eye contact** to communicate your intentions to the other drivers. If you plan to make a turn, ensure your signal is on. If you arrive at a four-way stop simultaneously with another driver, the vehicle on the right generally has the right-of-way. But, if you are in doubt, signal the other driver to make his move first.
- **Avoid situations** where you will have to back up. Try to park in positions where you will be able to drive forward when you leave.

Practice safe driving habits - one mile at a time - to add up to an accident-free trip.

Midnight Shift Nugget

Shiftworkers, Training & the Bottom Line

A recent study casts new light on the unique hazards posed to **shiftworkers**. Here's a look at what the study says and how to use the results to convince senior management to invest in special training for **shiftworkers**.



The Hazards of Shiftwork

Many employers, such as manufacturing plants, utilities and healthcare facilities, operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. So their workers must work shifts, some of which are overnight. Workers may also be scheduled to work a night shift one week and then a day shift the next. **Shiftwork takes its toll**. It throws off workers' "circadian rhythm" or natural body clock, making it hard for them to sleep when they're off duty. Shiftworkers are also prone to develop certain kinds of **illnesses** and because they're often **fatigued**, they're more vulnerable to **safety incidents**.

The good news is that workers can be trained to cope better with the rigors of shiftwork. But this form of special training isn't part of the traditional safety training budget. So persuading senior management to invest in such training isn't easy, especially when safety budgets are already so tight. What can you do to build a case for providing special training for shiftworkers?

A study by Circadian Technologies, an international consulting firm that specializes in shiftwork issues, provides some of the ammunition you need. The study shows that giving workers shiftwork lifestyle training can reduce safety incidents, absenteeism and turnover-all of which cost the company money.

In addition to saving money, shiftwork lifestyle training can also enhance revenues in the form of improved morale and productivity.

[How the Effects of Shiftwork Cost the Company Money](#)

Shiftworkers face considerable challenges. Their **morale is often low**. Their family and social lives may suffer because of their irregular hours, which contributes to their **stress**. The quantity and quality of shift workers' sleep is also typically low. So it's no surprise that sleep disorders, such as obstructive sleep apnea, are commonplace among shiftworkers. Shiftwork has also been associated with an increased risk of:

- Cardiovascular disease;
- Gastrointestinal disorders;
- Obesity; and
- Diabetes.

And the increased prevalence of such health problems often results in shiftworkers' increased use of **medication**, which can adversely affect their job performance.

How exactly do these problems impact employers? The medical ailments that shiftwork causes or contributes to all have an erosive impact on workers' productivity. And workers with such ailments utilize health services and drugs at a high rate and so drive up the company's health insurance costs.

How bad is the problem? Based on data collected by Circadian, shiftwork costs U.S. companies approximately \$206 billion a year, or about \$8,600 per shiftworker per year (based on 24 million shiftworkers). Shiftwork drives up employers' costs by increasing:

- Absenteeism;
- Turnover;
- Medical care;



- Safety incidents; and
- Production errors.

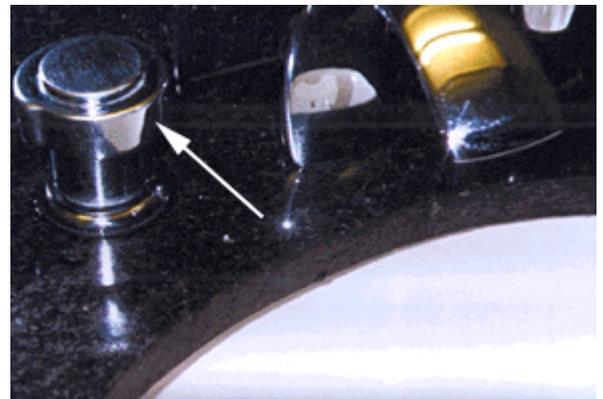
There are techniques that shiftworkers can use to **help mitigate** many of the problems associated with shiftwork. But these techniques aren't obvious and, unlike other skills, they can't be picked up on the job.

And teaching these skills isn't generally incorporated in standard safety training. They require a special kind of training. Unfortunately, most employers offer no form of shiftwork lifestyle training for their shiftworkers. According to Circadian, 77% of shiftwork facilities in the U.S. don't offer any such training.

Bad Design

Smooth as glass

This picture shows the hot water control knob on the bathroom sink in a fancy hotel. You can tell it's a fancy hotel because it has a marble sink and designer knobs. Unfortunately, the designer didn't have people try to turn the knobs with soap on their hands because the knobs are about as smooth as glass and almost impossible to turn. This is an example of something **being designed a certain way because it looks good rather than because it works well.**



Design suggestion

A well-designed object can be designed to both look good and be easy to use.

OUR WORLD

What's Happening to the Price of Food?

On Saturday, you can go out and blow about \$300 in less than an hour. And what do you think you got for my money? An IPOD? A couple of fancy bottles of wine? Some new clothes?



None of the above. That \$300 bought you a tank full of gas and about a half dozen bags of groceries.

It was a sobering experience, especially the food part. You can't be a discriminating food shopper. You pick out the items you need without scrutinizing prices, comparing sizes or seeking values. You just have a rough sense of what you're prepared to pay at the register when everything is totalled up. So when your not even 3/4 full-cart returned a nearly \$200 price tag, you almost keeled over. For the first time in your life you actually looked at the receipt to make sure it was right. It was.

It's Not Just Gas

Lately, we've been so fixated on the price of gas that we haven't noticed what's been happening to food. You don't need to be told that it's ugly. A new Congressional Research Service (CRS) report documents the dimensions of food price inflation. Food prices in the U.S. increased 4% in 2007.

That doesn't sound like a lot. But it was the largest annual jump since 1990. And prices are expected to increase 3.5% to 4.5% in 2008.

What's causing food prices to rise? The CRS study cites four factors:

1. Higher Domestic Demand

Demand for corn, soybeans and wheat have increased significantly. Here's what really gets me aggravated. Rising gas prices have fuelled demand for ethanol. Ethanol is made of corn. And it's supposed to make gas cheaper. But if ethanol is saving us money at the gas pump, it's costing us more at the supermarket checkout counter.

2. Low Supply

Globally, stocks of corn, wheat and soybeans are at 30-year lows as a result of drought in Australia and Eastern Europe and lousy weather in Canada, Western Europe and the Ukraine.

3. More Demand from China and India

Higher incomes are boosting demand for processed foods and meats in countries like China and India. Demand is also growing in lower-income parts of Asia as well as in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America.

4. The Weak Dollar

The decreasing value of the U.S. dollar has driven up the price of imports within the U.S. and commodities around the world. The bushel of wheat is undergoing much the same experience as the barrel of oil.

Source: CRS, [Food Price Inflation: Causes and Impacts](#),

12 Foods Where Organic Makes Sense

Avoiding the "dirty dozen" could dramatically cut your exposure to pesticides.

What's the dirty dozen, you ask? It's a watch list of the 12 most pesticide-polluted fruits and veggies. Solution: Grab the organic versions.

Good Reason to Go Organic

According to John La Puma, MD -- RealAge expert and author of the new book [ChefMD's Big Book of Culinary Medicine](#) -- going organic with these 12 fruits and veggies could cut your exposure to pesticides as much as 90 percent!



- **Fruits**
 - Peaches and nectarines
 - Strawberries and cherries
 - Apples and pears
 - Imported grapes
- **Veggies**
 - Spinach and lettuce
 - Potatoes and celery
 - Sweet bell peppers

Beyond Pesticides

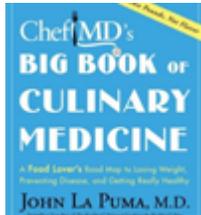
Cutting your exposure to pesticides is only one reason to go organic. La Puma says you'll be healthier, too, because some organic foods are more nutritious than their conventionally grown counterparts.

And here's a surprise: [Even the organic version of *this condiment* may be healthier for you.](#)

Check out [ChefMD's Big Book of Culinary Medicine](#) for additional healthful-eating guides, tips, and reports.



RealAge Benefit: Eating a diverse diet that includes 4 servings of fruit per day can make your RealAge as much as 4 years younger.



We are what we eat, and what we eat makes us strong and healthy or weak and frail. [ChefMD's Big Book of Culinary Medicine](#) is finally here to help you turn your kitchen pantry into a medicine cabinet. Eat your way to a healthier you with the fantastic flavors this MD dishes out.

PICTURE THIS!

The gentleman you see here is hard at work. He's using a powerful detergent to clean a surface above him. It seems that whatever's in that bucket is pretty potent. Consider how he's dressed to do the work: He's got the gloves, he's got the plastic bunny suit, and he's got the gumboots. [And he's got eye protection ... well ... forehead protection, anyway.](#)

