AUTOPILOT STANDARD OPERATING PRACTICES

- Always keep your heading bug synced with your actual or assigned heading. This keeps you engaged, ready for vectors, and helps you recognize a compass failure.

- Monitor vertical speed. If you are IFR and less than 500 FPM, report to ATC.

- Shallow the climb/descent rate prior to leveling off.

- Disengage autopilot and re-trim the flight controls after level off.

- TRIGGERS:

  - **"Fly heading xxx"** = Sync heading bug, engage HDG mode.

  - **"Intercept the final/localizer"** = ARM lateral mode only. No vertical mode.

  - **"Cleared for the approach"** = ARM approach (NAV, ILS, APPR, etc.)

- Say mode changes aloud and read them from the mode annunciator. Scan the dance card – mode annunciator – often.

- Using Vert Speed mode during climb or descent: STAY ENGAGED! You have no autopilot airspeed protection.

- When disconnecting the autopilot, hold the flight controls tightly in position. Do not hold them with a wet noodle hand.