

Pilots may get help in avoiding turbulence

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A University of Alabama-Huntsville study of data from weather satellites may soon help pilots avoid turbulence caused by convective thunderstorms.

Working with colleagues at the University of Wisconsin and NASA's Langley Research Center, John Mecikalski, an assistant professor of atmospheric science, has developed a system that's about 65 percent accurate in providing a one-hour warning before heavy rain starts to fall within a thunderstorm.

"Our goal is to take existing, real-time satellite instruments and predict aviation hazards due to thunderstorms and severe weather," said Mecikalski. "(The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) is evaluating our tool, the (Federal Aviation Administration) is testing it and the Huntsville National Weather Service office used it this past summer."

Results of the research were published in the January edition of the journal "Monthly Weather Review" and will be presented during the annual winter meeting of the American Meteorological Society in Atlanta.

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