



TAKE FIVE...

for safety
Five minutes reading
could save your life!

Winter tips

Winter brings changeable weather with fast-moving fronts, strong and gusty winds, blowing and drifting snow, and icing.

This calls for good judgment, caution, changing some habits, and caring for your aircraft.

So much for the generalities; let's get down to specifics.

WINTER CARE

- Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for winterizing.
- Use recommended baffling and covers.
- Check all hoses, flexible tubing, and seals for the signs of deterioration: cracks, hardening and lumps. Tighten loose clamps and fittings.
- Adjust control cables to compensate for cold contraction.
- Remove wheel covers to reduce the chance of frozen slush locking the wheels and brakes.
- Inspect the heater system for leaks (carbon monoxide).
- Use covers for at least the pitot, engine and wings if your aircraft is parked outdoors.
- Top up the fuel after landing—this will reduce condensation icing in the fuel system.
- Keep the battery charged, or remove if your aircraft is parked outside. (Take the same care of the emergency locator transmitter (ELT) battery. If you need it, you'll want it to perform properly.)

BE WEATHER WISE

Winter weather is not more hazardous; it's just different—and a trifle unforgiving.

- Plan carefully. (Do you really understand that forecast? Have you prepare alternate ways out in case you run into a problem or unexpected weather. Have you allowed for the shorter day?)
- Carry a safe margin of fuel for any change in plans.
- File a flight plan or itinerary and forward any amendments to air traffic control.
- Dress for the weather outside the cockpit. (You could have heater fail or even an emergency landing.)
- Monitor weather broadcasts, request *pireps* (and give them), and get forecast updates en route.

- Watch for the *warning signs of weather* ahead: clouds, indefinite horizon, wind and temperature changes, and cars using headlights during the day (blowing surface snow).
- Know what whiteout is, especially if you fly over large frozen lakes or snow-covered terrain with no contrasting features. It happens when snow-covered featureless terrain blending into overcast sky: the horizon disappears, disorientation sets in quickly, height perception is lost. Can you handle instrument flight?
- Be alert for carburetor icing around the freezing mark.
- Warm the engine periodically during low-power descents and approaches.
- Set reasonable limits and stick to them; otherwise you could be tempted into pressing-on.

PREFLIGHT ADDITIONS

- Make sure the oil breather tubes are ice-free.
- Drain enough fuel for a proper contamination check. (If it doesn't drain freely, suspect ice in the line or sump.)
- Clear the pitot tube, heater intake, fuel vents, and carburetor intake of snow or ice.
- Make sure the gear is ice-free.
- Clear ice, snow and frost from lift and control surfaces. (Even a little frost can destroy lift!)
- Bring adequate survival gear
- Check the ELT transmission.
- Make sure the ski safety cables and shock cords are in place.
- Preheat the engine and cockpit, if possible
- Follow oil dilute directions, if equipped.

CARBON MONOXIDE

Don't count on fumes from a leaky heater to warn you of carbon monoxide. Here are some of the symptoms: sluggishness warmth, tightness across the forehead and headache, ringing in the ears, nausea, dizziness, and dimming of vision. If any of these occur, shut off the cabin heat, open a fresh air source, don't smoke (it will aggravate your condition), use 100 percent oxygen if available, land as soon as possible.

These tips result from what has happened to others. They can save your life!

