

# Common sense flying tips not normally taught at flying schools

*As presented by Theo Truter for NVAV on 29 sept 2018*

## ***Any good flight starts with good preparations***

- You check the weather and print out the actual conditions and the forecasts. Often your weather site requires a log-in, which is in itself a proof that you were checking.
- Always carry a **knee-board**, where even simple things like the ATC instructions, QNH, wind, temperature, taxi-way to be used to the departure runway, can be entered in flying short-hand. In certain locations, the ATC may issue other requirements, which require a correct read-back; so be prepared for that.
- In certain countries, the filing of a **flight-plan** is mandatory beforehand, for any movement of flying.
- There too they require a start-request to open your flight-plan.  
Be prepared to write down what they say. It's possible to record that as well.  
On your knee-board, have the airport diagram showing taxi-ways ,  
the runway in use and it's headings, circuit-heights, departure and arrival routes.  
Pre-set the Tower and Departure, Nav-aid frequencies, from your frequency chart.

## ***The pre-flight inspection***

In addition to your standard walk-around items, I've seen other vitally important clues that require checking and a decision whether flight will be safe.

- How about pitot blockage, from insects, or even the cover!
- Make the cover visible in the cockpit  
fuel-vent damage and blockage, control-surface noises that indicate potential problems, missing split-pins on the landing gear or control surfaces, propeller spinner cracks or loose-ness, from pushing/pulling, main door and luggage compartment latching, fuel-cap seals and correct closure. Look inside that the is fuel there! A dipstick is also useful.  
Do you know that after an oil-change, the new oil is often not easily visible?  
Here there are two suggestions that will help confirming that there is oil on the dip-stick.  
Wipe the dip-stick clean with a fresh tissue and see and feel the oil , then apply your spittle onto the dip-stick and voila! - the new oil becomes visible!

## ***A pre-take-off briefing***

- Even when flying solo, mentally run through actions to follow.
- It could as simple as deciding to abort if anything doesn't look or sound right.
- As soon as there is a passenger/crew-member, then it's essential to verbally communicate emergency procedures. That person needs to know beforehand what not to do, or what is recommended.

## *In-flight problems*

- Loss of rudder-use; if conventional doors are fitted, such as on Cessna 152/172/182/206, then slightly opening the appropriate side, will create some yaw to your advantage.
- Loss of elevator use; try using small inputs of trim, or weight-shifting or power changes to control either nose-down, nose-up or just to descend.
- In case you have to execute a water landing, un-latch the door or doors just enough that the latch-pin is clear of the fuselage, then turn the latch so that it prevents the door from closing. Appropriate on American light-planes. This ensures that the doors will open even after splash-down. In the event of not being able to open the door, then remember that kicking at the windows or windscreen can create an escape hole. Have you ever considered wearing a life-jacket?
- In case you have to execute a **EFATO** ( engine failure after take-off ) unlatch the door(s) so that they can open in the event of fuselage damage. Review the Mayday call. If unable to stop, how about using the wings between trees, fence-posts as a slow-down aid. Always steer the nose away from obstacles, so that you avoid a sudden stop which often results in “blunt-force trauma” or injuries.

## *The four “C’s”\**

We are taught the four C’s of aviation in primary training.

- When faced with difficulty, such as getting lost or flying VFR into IMC, the safest course of action is to **Climb, Communicate, Confess and Comply** with instructions.

But there is another set of C’s that has become more relevant to me as my flying experience has progressed:

- A pilot goes through four stages of proficiency when learning a new airplane, a new set of skills, or working in a new environment. Those stages are: **Cautious, Compliant (or Current), Confident and Complacent.**

The last of these can kill you.\*

(the \* marked statements are quotes from Air Facts Journal )