

Accident Prevention Program

Preventing Accidents During Aircraft Ground Operations

Taxiing Accidents

Learning to taxi an aircraft on the ground is one of the first operations a student pilot is taught during training. Apparently the old cliché, "First learned and soon forgot" holds true with pilots too, because a surprising number of accidents or incidents occur annually during taxi operations. Taxiing appears to be such an elementary operation that pilots become complacent and inattentive to ground control of the aircraft. Operating on the ground during higher than normal or gusty wind conditions or in close proximity to large and turbine-powered aircraft can be particularly hazardous for small general aviation aircraft. Taxiing off the side of runways and taxiways, running into potholes, striking runway marker lights or reflectors, etc., Usually cause damage to landing gear and propellers, and may also result in an upset of the aircraft. Collisions with other taxiing or parked aircraft happen all too often. Explaining such mishaps to the investigating authorities and to the insurance company can be embarrassing to a pilot because there is seldom an acceptable excuse for having a taxi accident.

The original CAA Pilot Training Handbook published in 1938 advised students and pilots to taxi no faster than a person walking rapidly. This is still very sound advice when taxiing on ramps and in parking areas. Taxi slow enough that the aircraft will stop instantly when the brakes are applied or the aircraft will stop on its own when the throttles are closed.

Stay Alert While Taxiing

1. Taxi Slowly.
2. Check your brakes before moving more than the length of the aircraft.
3. Taxi Cautiously.
4. Keep a sharp lookout outside of the cockpit. This is not the time to be studying maps, running cockpit checklists, or copying ATC clearances.
5. Taxi Cautiously.
6. If the clearance between objects looks too narrow, it probably is. STOP. Shut down and take a look or have someone on the ground guide you through. Always have a guide on the ground to assist you when it is necessary to taxi in congested areas.
7. Taxi Cautiously. 8. Avoid taxiing behind or too closely to large and turbine-powered aircraft and be careful while taxiing under high wind or gusty wind conditions.
8. Oh Yes ! Taxi Cautiously.

Propeller Accidents

1. Hand propping accidents, like taxiing accidents, just should not happen, but they do. Every year, too many persons ignore safety precautions and try to hand-start aircraft engines without having a qualified person at the controls. And every year many of these aircraft get away and collide with other aircraft or obstructions that may be in their path. Regardless of what the aircraft runs into, the results will be the same--costly repairs. Hand propping accidents may also result in serious or fatal injuries. Few people who have been struck by a turning propeller have escaped with minor injuries.

No one should attempt to start an aircraft engine without a qualified person at the cockpit controls. The person turning the propeller should be properly trained in the technique of hand cranking. If you have in mind to try hand propping by yourself--DON'T. If you must hand prop--get qualified help to position the engine controls and switches during the starting procedure. If hand propping can be avoided--DO.

2. Another type of accident that happens too frequently occurs when enplaning or deplaning--passengers walk or run into spinning propellers or helicopter tail rotors.

People not accustomed to being around aircraft may fail to see the rotating propeller and inadvertently step into the blade arc. Few survive. The engines should be shut down when enplaning and deplaning passengers unless there are qualified persons on the ramp capable of controlling pedestrian traffic to and from the aircraft.

**SAFETY IS NO ACCIDENT!
STAY ALERT!**

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