



FLYING LESSONS for July 6, 2017

FLYING LESSONS uses recent mishap reports to consider what *might* have contributed to accidents, so you can make better decisions if you face similar circumstances. In almost all cases design characteristics of a specific airplane have little direct bearing on the possible causes of aircraft accidents—but knowing how your airplane's systems respond can make the difference as a scenario unfolds. So apply these *FLYING LESSONS* to the specific airplane you fly. Verify all technical information before applying it to your aircraft or operation, with manufacturers' data and recommendations taking precedence. **You are pilot in command, and are ultimately responsible for the decisions you make.**

FLYING LESSONS is an independent product of MASTERY FLIGHT TRAINING, INC. www.mastery-flight-training.com

Pursue *Mastery of Flight*™

This week's LESSONS:

Are you good enough for Oshkosh?

Flying into Oshkosh, Wisconsin's Wittman Regional Airport (KOSH) for EAA AirVenture is an amazing experience. But it's one that requires special expertise, and for the pilot to be at the very top of his or her game. Come to think of it, we need to be at our very best *every* time we fly. This year, as we review my annual **Flying into Oshkosh** series, think about how the *LESSONS* of each article apply to you regardless of where you fly. Ask yourself if you're **good enough for Oshkosh**, whether you're flying to the show or not.

AirVenture Arrival Part 5: Passenger Training

You'll have a blast flying into AirVenture, but you may have your hands full, too. There's basic aircraft control; unusual, one-way radio procedures; and the hustle of fitting into the high-density flow on the busiest days before and during the show. It makes your flight far, far safer, and a lot more fun, if you take along at least one observer to help you look outside the airplane.

Train your *passenger* to be an *observer* (especially if he or she is not a pilot). Teach what to look for, and how to communicate with you. Before you take off for Oshkosh review some basics, such as:

- The "o'clock" system of identifying an airplane's position relative to your own ("12 o'clock high", etc.).
- If safely possible, what a typical general aviation airplane looks like at a distance of one mile and half a mile (but don't get any closer—that approaches a "formation flight"). You can do this by pointing out other airplanes in an airport traffic pattern on a pre-Oshkosh flight.
- Rules of thumb like "Cessnas have high wings, Pipers have low wings, a biplane has two wings," etc. Keep it very basic—the Oshkosh arrival controllers will, so prepare your observer for what he/she should expect (if not experienced in light airplanes).
- How to help find charts, parts of the arrival NOTAM, etc. that you may need.
- The navigation procedure inbound on the visual arrival path, to help orient your passenger.
- How to help you, with short, precise phrases like "I see the traffic, three o'clock level", "you're left of the arrival course", "your landing gear is not down", "you're 10 knots slow"—whatever you can work out with your observer beforehand.

You might even make up a one-page “observer guide”, with pictures and phrases that apply to your flight, to take along for the arrival portion of your flight.

The observer’s primary mission is **traffic avoidance**. It’s easy to get caught up in the excitement and forget that basic mission, so it’ll take some briefing-instilled discipline to make this happen. Remember also that you may have observers along to help, but **you are still wholly responsible** as pilot-in-command.

FLYING LESSON: Are you good enough to train your passengers to be an observer, along to help you spot traffic and landmarks for a safe arrival at AirVenture or wherever you fly?

AirVenture Arrival Part 6: Accept or Decline

I’ve never been to Oshkosh when I have **not** seen at least one airplane ground-loop. It’s almost always a tailwheel airplane, but I’ve seen loss of directional control in “nosewheel” designs as well. And no, I wasn’t flying all (or even any) of these airplanes.

Loss of directional control on landing is almost always a result of pilot distraction. Adverse winds are usually a contributing factor. In many cases wind exceeds the pilot’s crosswind currency; in others the “ground loop” comes from exceeding the airplane’s capability.

There’s one thing in common among all the Oshkosh ground-loops I’ve personally witnessed, however—*landing with a quartering tailwind, especially landings on Runway 36 with the typical summer’s southwest wind.*

Pressed to route as many arrivals as possible into Wittman Field in the early stages of AirVenture, and with demands from flight demonstrations, air show acts, fly-bys and departures, the superb professionals that work Air Traffic procedures during the event are sometimes forced to route traffic to non-optimal runways, with light-to-moderate tailwind components.

LESSONS as you prepare for Oshkosh

Regardless of your airplane’s landing gear configuration,

- **Practice your crosswind landings.** Get *really* good at them...and more importantly, know your limitations, and the limitations of the airplane.
- Very cautiously try a few **landings on a wide runway with a very light tail-component crosswind**. Assume you’ll have to go around unless things work out perfectly (instead of the opposite expectation of a successful landing).
- Note that **left-turning tendency** of most propeller airplanes means it’ll be harder to maintain control with a wind from behind your left.
- Get familiar with whether you can land safely with any tailwind component at all, and if so, what tailwind you can safely handle. **Develop—and adhere to—a personal crosswind and personal tailwind component limitation.**

This is an EXCELLENT exercise for hiring a good CFI experienced and current in your airplane type, and exploring under low-stress, controlled conditions before you’re faced with the test at Oshkosh.

With your personal crosswind/tailwind limitations and very recent practice in mind, be ready to follow AirVenture procedures to break out of the arrival early, or go around if surface winds exceed your capability.

Remember that when given an ATC clearance, it is **your** responsibility to determine whether complying is safe. If you have *any* doubts, it is **your** responsibility as Pilot-in-Command to **decline the clearance** and request a revised clearance. Pilots don’t like to ask the tower for a runway change. You might not get it at Oshkosh, and have to divert to another airport. At the same time, it’s *your* safety and that of your passengers at risk—if anything goes wrong it’s *your* fault. Do not delegate the decision to land to Air Traffic Control, or to other pilots if arriving in an organized group.

Remember ATC sequences traffic for arrival, but **it's your responsibility** as pilot-in-command, and mastery of your landing maneuver should never seriously be in doubt.

FLYING LESSON: Are you good enough to know your personal crosswind and tailwind component limitations, and willing to decline a landing clearance and divert if conditions exceed your limits—always, but even when landing at Oshkosh?

Are you flying to AirVenture this year? Go flying, practice the six *LESSONS* from this and the two previous reports (all three weekly reports are linked at www.mastery-flight-training.com) and see if you're **good enough for Oshkosh**. If not, there's still time to practice, or to find a different way to get there.

Are you not flying to AirVenture this year? Go practice the six *LESSONS* anyway. If you're not **good enough for Oshkosh**, you know what you need to be working on to master your airplane and its environment for the flights you *do* make.

Comments? Questions? Let us learn from you, at mastery.flight.training@cox.net



Lost Comm in IMC Watch This Video...



See www.pilotworkshop.com/blog/lost-comm?ad-tracking=lost-comm-turn

I am so very grateful for all you give to aviation, Tom. I'm sure there are thousands more who feel the same.

— Richard Benson

Thank *you*, Richard. And thanks to the dozens of [readers who have donated to help cover my expenses](#) for hosting and delivering *FLYING LESSONS Weekly*—many, like you, donating several times or even on an automatic monthly schedule.

Please help me cover the costs of providing *FLYING LESSONS* through the secure **PayPal donations button at www.mastery-flight-training.com**.

See https://www.paypal.com/us/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_flow&SESSION=MckFayMMh_ud6KQj8vXXTFJ53cp9ZrBHs8CfhHj24zsqiF9aTOisrjgUi&dispatch=5885d80a13c0db1f8e263663d3faee8d333dc9aaeed3fe0b5b299d55fd35542

Or send a check to **Mastery Flight Training, Inc.** to 247 Tiffany Street, Rose Hill, Kansas USA 67133.

Thank you, [generous supporters](#).

See http://www.mastery-flight-training.com/be_a_master_pilot.html

Share safer skies. [Forward FLYING LESSONS to a friend](#)



Pursue Mastery of Flight.

Thomas P. Turner, M.S. Aviation Safety
Flight Instructor Hall of Fame 2015 Inductee
2010 National FAA Safety Team Representative of the Year
2008 FAA Central Region CFI of the Year
Three-time Master CFI

FLYING LESSONS is ©2017 Mastery Flight Training, Inc. For more information see www.mastery-flight-training.com, or contact mastery.flight.training@cox.net.