

AASF Safety Spot, February 2022

Greetings. I don't know about you, but I haven't gotten much flying done this winter. Seems like the weather is either too bad, too cold, or the airplane is encrusted in ice. My annual was just completed and I'm going to get airborne soon. My lapse in currency means I will need to pay more than casual attention to all aspects of my next flight—from preflight, to planning and maybe even some chair flying ahead of time. I found two articles in AVWEB that spoke to me -- jogged my memory of things past and things I want to avoid in the future.

First Flight After Maintenance: The first article I call your attention to is “First Flight After Maintenance” [Post-Repair Flights: Recognize The Risks - AVweb](#) The author tells the tale of many rude experiences he's had in that first flight after maintenance and offers suggestions on how to avoid similar situations.

Slow Down and Think: The author of “Take a Minute” [Take A Minute - AVweb](#) does a great job of reminding us to slow down and not let our enthusiasm, or panic, stampede us into action before we've thought things through. I had to smile as the author told how one of his CFI's divided the world of emergency response into one sip or two sips of coffee (before reacting). I smiled because I was given similar advice back in the mid-1970s when I was checking out in my first fighter, an A7D. My instructor told me to “hack the clock” before reacting to an emergency. Eleven years later, my F-16 experienced a massive compressor stall about 8 seconds after breaking ground and 2 seconds after the gear went clunk into the wheel wells. Hack the clock echoed in my head! That meant don't panic, fly the plane, analyze what's happening, determine what you can do about it, now react. One of the witnesses on the ground told me the fireballs that came out of the intake were bigger than the afterburner plume coming out of the tailpipe. It ended well. I got the plane and 3000 pounds of live bombs back on the ground without damage. The maintenance debriefer asked if I had noted the maximum turbine inlet temperature. Are you kidding me? The only thing I noted was that I was still flying, slowly gaining altitude, and thought I would clear the trees at the far end of the runway!

Slow Down and Think 2: Two incidents from the NTSB data base that are close to home. Fortunately, no injuries except to the airplanes.

<https://data.nts.gov/carol-reppen/api/Aviation/ReportMain/GenerateNewestReport/101070/pdf>

Big Lake, AK, C172, March 9, 2020, 2030 Local. Takeoff attempted with loose snow on runway. Unable to obtain lift off speed, the pilot tries again by attempting high speed taxi onto runway and ends up in a snow berm.

<https://data.nts.gov/carol-reppen/api/Aviation/ReportMain/GenerateNewestReport/102370/pdf>

Juneau, AK PA18, December 2, 2020, 1553 Local. Loss of control on ground. Substantial damage. No injuries. Taxied with winds 25G45. The wind lifted the right wing and the airplane ended up in a ditch.

Structural Failures in PA-12 and PA-14 Rudder Posts: NTSB has recommended the FAA issue an AD on certain Piper rudder posts. [Structural Failure of Piper Part Number 40622 Rudder Posts Made of 1025 Carbon Steel \(ntsb.gov\)](#) The body of their recommendation cites two in-flight failures that occurred in the Anchorage, AK area within the last two years. Links to those two incidents follow.

<https://data.nts.gov/carol-reppen/api/Aviation/ReportMain/GenerateNewestReport/101415/pdf>

ANC20LA059, Anchorage, Alaska. On June 8, 2020, about 0945 Alaska daylight time, a float-equipped Piper PA-12 airplane, N3188M, sustained substantial damage when its rudder structurally failed in flight about 8 miles north of Anchorage, Alaska. The flight instructor and private pilot receiving instruction were not injured.

<https://data.nts.gov/carol-reppen/api/Aviation/ReportMain/GenerateNewestReport/103552/pdf>

ANC21LA064, Anchorage, Alaska. On July 23, 2021, about 1510 Alaska daylight time, a float-equipped Piper PA-14 airplane, N4206H, sustained substantial damage when its rudder structurally failed in flight about 15 miles southeast of Anchorage, Alaska. The commercial pilot was not injured.

Electric Trainers Ready for Prime Time? [Pipistrel Velis Flight Trial: Cool Airplane, Not For U.S. Market - AVweb](#) Paul Bertorelli visits Florida Tech to learn about and fly the latest Pipistrel electric airplane that is certified in Europe. This video may address some of the questions you have about electric airplanes systems, capabilities and whether they are ready for prime time. Spoiler alert, flying time and “fuel reserves” are problematic.

Until next month, remember to “Hack the Clock” and fly safe.

Rocky