



"To improve aviation safety in Alaska through education, advocacy, and research."



ALASKAN AVIATION SAFETY FOUNDATION

WINTER 2024/2025

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER, DECEMBER 2024



Greetings Alaskan Aviation Safety Foundation Members,

Season's greetings to all. I hope you've had a happy and productive year. We held our Winter Safety Seminar on November 23rd, and it was great to see so many familiar faces. As usual, our presenters were outstanding, and we all learned a few things. Read the roundup that follows and please take the time to view the videos at www.aasfonline.org/videos.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

PAGE 1.....CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

PAGE 2-5.....WINTER SAFETY SEMINAR ROUNDUP

PAGE 6.....REGULATION CHANGES

PAGE 7.....A FEW QUICK NOTES

I'm excited to tell you that we used the November seminar to beta test a system that allows our members to view future seminars online. Our former Chairman, Harry Keiling, watched from Arizona. Member, Roger Motzko, watched from Texas and board member Tom George watched from Fairbanks. We'll provide detailed log-in instructions prior to our next seminar.

While I am excited about using technology to extend our reach to members outside the Anchorage bowl, I encourage Anchorage area residents to continue to attend in-person. Technology is great, but so is meeting with your peers, flight service, FFAST team members, and vendors.

As the new year turns over, I ask everyone who hasn't already done so to renew their membership for calendar year 2025. AASF depends on membership dues and donations to fund our activities and scholarships. If you are reading this on a computer or smartphone, go to www.aasfonline.org and click on the blue "Join, Renew, or Donate Now" banner. I chose the auto-renewal option, so I won't forget next year.

Wishing You Blue Skies and Tailwinds for 2025,

*Rocky Capozzi
Chairman of the Board*

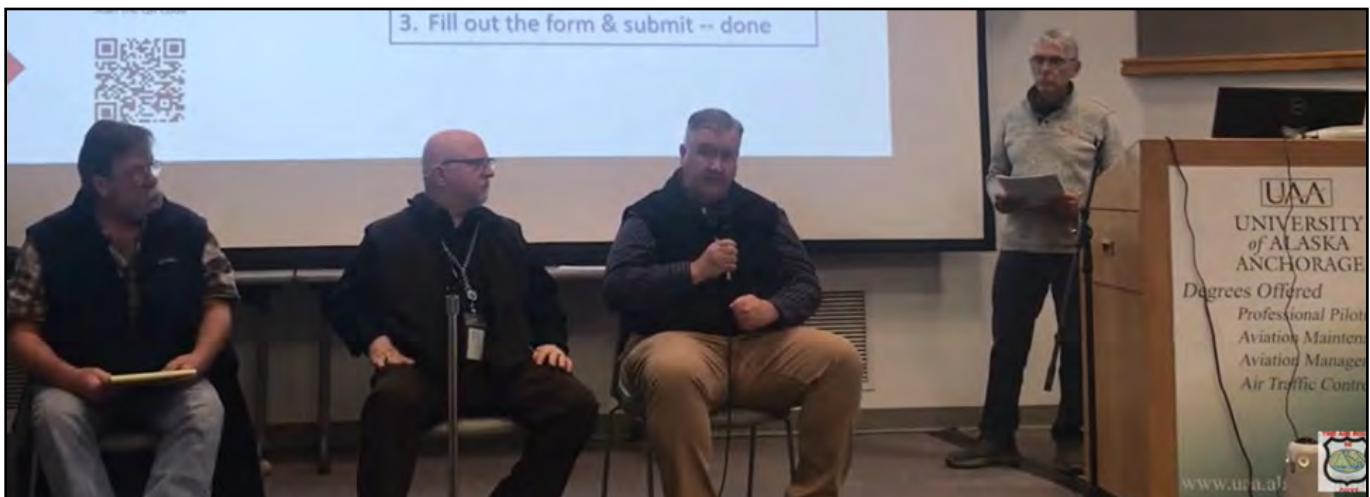


WINTER SAFETY SEMINAR ROUNDUP

Our Winter Safety Seminar was held on Saturday, November 23, 2024. Thanks to all who participated. The presentations were recorded and mounted on our website www.aasfonline.org/videos I encourage everyone who didn't get the opportunity to attend to follow the links. Topics presented included SVFR, Survival, Illusions and Winter Ops Tips.



SVFR: Our SVFR panel consisted of Rob Stephenson (former Quality Assurance Manager at Anchorage Center and currently Runway Safety Manager, Alaska), Craig Emery (Chief Pilot Spurnak Airways and owner of Craig Air a Part 135 air taxi, FAA Master Pilot Award, extensive experience in Western Alaska), Mark O'Connell (FAA Flight Service, CFI/CFII/MEI Bush Pilot). All panel members have Alaskan careers ranging from 20 years to 40+ years. Our [September Safety Spot](#) covered the basics of SVFR, but this panel of "three wisemen" expanded on the many nuances of SVFR in Alaska. You can view their panel discussion on our website at <https://aasfonline.org/videos>. Some of the key takeaways include the following:



(continued on page 3)

(Winter Safety Seminar Roundup continued from page 2)

Anchorage Center (ZAN) plays a role in the majority of SVFR operations in Alaska. Most of our SVFR operations occur in Class E airspace at airports without towers. ZAN has Letters of Agreement with the responsible FSSs authorizing them to control the SVFR operations. The “handoff” from ZAN to FSS occurs many times a day throughout Alaska. At most Class E locations, ATC control is exercised “procedurally.” This means it is wholly dependent on communications between the pilot and FSS. The FSS does not have radar or ADS-B feeds.

SVFR is not an IFR flight plan. Pilots must request SVFR and must report down and clear of the runway on inbound flights and clear of the airport traffic area on outbounds. Failure to do so will result in the airspace remaining closed or restricted for a period of time and may result in the launch of Search and Rescue assets.

Some Class E surface areas have letters of agreement that allow multiple SVFR operations at the same time. To “play” in such a scenario the pilot requesting to enter under SVFR must confirm with the controlling FSS that they are capable of and willing to maintain separation from any and all aircraft operating in the control zone. Think twice before accepting this responsibility...if the visibility is approaching the 1 statute mile minimum, it’s unlikely you can give that guarantee.

There are times when you may be asked to hold clear of a control zone until the preceding IFR or SVFR is on the ground. You should not hesitate to declare an emergency if the weather is deteriorating rapidly, or some other contingency arises that necessitates getting on the ground immediately.

You should not attempt night SVFR operations unless you are IFR rated and current, and your airplane is IFR certified with the pitot static system and transponder checked within the preceding 24 months (91.411, 91.413).

SVFR into the Anchorage bowl airports from the vicinity of Port McKenzie is a particularly risky operation as other traffic may be trying to go into or out of Ted Stevens, Lake Hood, or Merrill Field. At night, you should not attempt to cross the inlet inbound unless you can see the lights on the other side. Any turn to avoid clouds will likely result in violating adjoining airspace. If you are forced to deviate to maintain clear of clouds, declare an emergency.



Survival: Bart Stone gave an outstanding survival presentation. This must-see presentation is found on our website at <https://aasfonline.org/videos>. Bart begins his presentation by showing a video he produced in the early 1990s titled *Will, Skill, and Luck*. It’s the story of three Park Service employees who survived a water crash in remote Alaska. Their survival was mostly a function of will and good luck. Following the video, Bart teaches us how we can reduce the role of luck and improve our odds through better preparation. Some of Bart’s key points follow:

Winter conditions prevail in the mountains throughout the year in Alaska. If you’re flying in or crossing those ranges, you need appropriate gear.

The only survival gear you are guaranteed to have following crash, is your survival vest and the clothing you are wearing—choose wisely.

It goes without saying you should leave a flight plan, but you also need to notify someone of any deviations you make in-flight. It vastly shortens search time.

(continued on page 4)

(Winter Safety Seminar Roundup continued from page 3)

Keep survival gear you aren't wearing in an easily accessible place, typically up front in the right seat. For overwater flights, any flotation gear you aren't wearing should be kept up front. Bart suggests attaching a lanyard from your survival pack to your wrist or a place where you can easily grab as you egress the airplane.

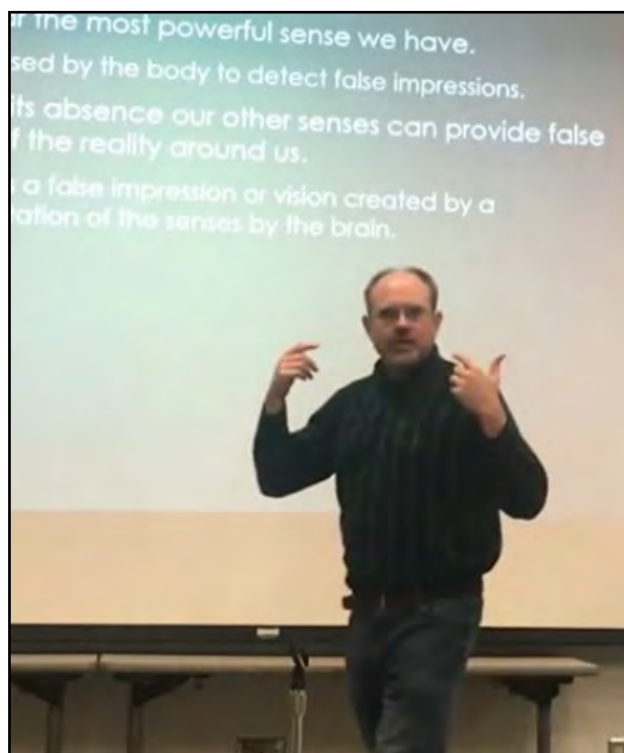
Once you determine you are going down, TURN ON THE ELT. This should be the first step of your BOLD FACE procedures. Depending on how you go down ELT may not trigger automatically and won't work if you are inverted or underwater. Better to start transmitting your position before touch down.

Bart took us through his survival vest and the rationale for each item and the way it is packed. It is well worth your time to view this video and then take action to prepare yourself for a survival situation.

Lastly, Bart charged us to take our survival gear and use it to spend a night outside. We will quickly learn whether we've packed properly and thought through the challenges we would face in an actual situation.

Illusions: Dr. Ray Weber, Dean of the UAA Community and Technical College and former Professor of Aviation, reviewed the most common visual and vestibular illusions pilots experience. The illusion video can be found on our website at <https://aasfonline.org/videos>. This presentation dovetailed nicely with the panel discussion on the hazards associated with SVFR in marginal visual conditions and night. Ray differentiated among the various visual illusions and discussed how and where pilots might typically encounter them. Two of the biggest contributors to visual illusions are geometry (e.g. think upsloping or down sloping runways or terrain) and lack of contrast (e.g. think of lack of horizon like whiteout conditions, black hole approaches, or haze layers at dawn and dusk).

Vestibular illusions are principally caused by tricking the sensors in our inner ears – examples are the “leans,” graveyard spiral, and a false sense of climb or descent. A key point concerning our susceptibility to vestibular illusions is that we are most likely to experience them when our eyes, our primary sensors, are deprived of information (e.g. black night with no visible horizon) or presented with false information (e.g. sloping cloud deck, or sloping terrain with low contrast). Problems arise when our brains can't make sense of conflicting sensory inputs, for example a disagreement about wings level flight between our instruments and our semicircular canals.



Winter Ops and Tips: Carollea Hubbard Assistant Professor of Aviation Maintenance at UAA and retired FedEx mechanic provided tips for winter operations. The video can be found here <https://aasfonline.org/videos>. Some of Carollea's tips:

Given a choice, keep your plane in the warmest driest place available to you.

If you must keep your plane outside, close up all the openings. Use wing, engine, pitot and static port covers. Water is the enemy.

If you don't intend to fly during the winter, consider aviation anti-rust oil and desiccant plugs. Keep the fuel tanks full to prevent water condensation or corrosion.

(continued on page 5)

(Winter Safety Seminar Roundup continued from page 4)

CO poisoning threat in the winter is high since you are using cabin heat all the time. Be sure you have a current CO sensor and check it in flight as well as before takeoff.

Engine heating technique is a subject of some debate. There are still two schools of thought about whether continuous heating or heat only before flight is the best approach. The consensus approach is to apply engine heat with sufficient lead time to warm the engine and the oil before flight. If you intend to do continuous heating, ensure you use a thermostatically controlled heater, so you don't cook the oil.

Interior heating is recommended, too. It's good for the avionics and the pilot.

Ensure your batteries are sufficiently charged to start your engine and carry the electric load in the event of alternator / generator failure after takeoff. Cold is an enemy of battery power. If you use a battery charger, be sure to use a charger that's appropriate for aircraft batteries. Use the charger in accordance with any instructions from your battery's manufacturer. Concord Battery does not recommend continuous use and states that it may reduce battery life.

During pre-flight, take care to ensure hinges and flight control movement is not impeded by ice accumulation. Wings and flight control surfaces must be free of ice and frost per regulation.

Give yourself plenty of time to do the preflight. Everything takes longer in the cold. Don't give in to the temptation to speed it up so you can get in a warm cockpit.

Fill the tanks immediately after flight to minimize the possibility of water condensation.

All types of icing are a threat, carburetor, airframe, induction, impact, freezing fog etc.

Remove snow from your airplane. Deep snow accumulation can cause structural problems. The use of wing covers makes it easier to aggressively remove snow without endangering the paint compared to an uncovered wing or control surface.



REGULATION CHANGES

The FAA published several “pilot positive” regulation changes recently.

BASICMED:

“Covered aircraft” see an increase in the number of allowable passengers from 5 to 6, increase the number of occupants from 6 to 7, and increase the maximum takeoff weight from 6,000 pounds to 12,500 pounds, while excluding certain transport category rotorcraft. Examiners are allowed to conduct practical tests or proficiency checks if they meet the requirements for operating under BasicMed and the operation is conducted in a covered aircraft. This link takes you to the rule: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/11/18/2024-26935/regulatory-updates-to-basicmed>

COMPLIANCE:

The FAA published a fundamental change to their compliance policy in September 2024. Basically, a pilot will no longer be subject to enforcement action for any deviations that arise from properly exercising their command authority following an emergency declaration. The pilot remains subject to enforcement action for regulatory deviations that led to an emergency of their own making but not for the actions taken to save the situation and safely recover. An example might be a pilot who fails to properly plan their fuel then declares a fuel emergency and is granted traffic priority. The pilot is still subject to compliance actions for poor flight planning, but the emergency declaration and subsequent actions correctly taken to recover the airplane are not subject to punitive action. The underlying concept is simple. A ‘just’ safety culture encourages pilots to declare emergencies when appropriate. The important thing is to get the airplane safely on the ground. Therefore, a pilot should not fear declaring an emergency when appropriate. The pertinent guidance is published in **FAA Order 8900.1 Vol. 14 Chapter 3 Section 7**. If you would like to read the document, go to <https://drs.faa.gov>, enter “8900.1 CHG930” in the search bar, then look for the document that matches the bold face above.

CFI CERTIFICATE RENEWAL:

Beginning January 1, 2025, reissued or newly issued CFI certificates won’t have an expiration date printed on the certificate. Where CFI endorsements previously bore an expiration date, moving forward the CFI endorsement will include a “Recent Experience” (“RE”) date instead. Windows for completing two-year recurrent training remain the same. However, CFIs who do not complete their currency training before their expiration / recent experience date are given a three month grace period to complete their training. After that, they will require a practical examination to regain their CFI certificate.

[Read the FAA document here.](#)

[Check out the AOPA summary with FAQs here.](#)



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Pick.Click.Give. is a great way for Alaskans to support eligible non-profit organizations by donating a portion of their Permanent Fund Dividend to Alaskan causes important to them. We hope you will consider the Alaskan Aviation Safety Foundation this year! Your gift to the Alaskan Aviation Safety Foundation will help us to continue our mission to 'improve aviation safety through education, advocacy and research,' and can be made in increments of \$25 up to the full amount of your dividend.



Pick.Click.Give. donations can easily be applied during your PFD enrollment (Jan. 1 – Mar. 31) or you can update your already filed PFD application to include a Pick.Click.Give. donation any time until Aug. 31.

Scan the code or go to www.pickclickgive.org for more information on **Pick.Click.Give.** And please remember the Alaskan Aviation Safety Foundation when giving this year!

Thank you and Happy New Year!

A FEW QUICK NOTES:

- AASF awarded three scholarships for 2024. Aiden Coy, of Fairbanks won the Tom Wardleigh Memorial Scholarship. Ellah Wardell of Anchorage won the Ginny Hyatt Memorial Scholarship. Alayna McRoberts of Redmond, Oregon won the Ellen Paneok Memorial Scholarship.
- AOPA recently published the 34th annual AOPA Air Safety Institute Accident Report (McSpadden Report) that categorizes and dissects the 2022 GA accident experience. It can be found here: [The Richard G. McSpadden Report - AOPA](#).
- AOPA Air Safety Institute put out a Real Pilot Stories video titled: [A Cold Weather Catastrophe Real Pilot Stories Cold Weather Catastrophe - AOPA](#). The story is told by the pilot survivor and the message is that severe cold can affect not just your motor skills but your judgment and ability to make rational decisions. If you've ever been tempted to take a long flight even though you aren't getting any heat, this video gives you plenty to think about. On a personal note, I once took off on a cold winter day in an OV-10 while stationed in Korea, even though I knew the heat wasn't working. I decided to turn around and land after about 20 minutes because I was getting very cold and numb. Despite the fact that the entire flight only lasted about 45 minutes, I'd lost all feeling and dexterity in my fingers and the crew chief had to unbuckle my harness to get me out of the airplane.
- **Time to Renew w/AASF: Online at <https://aasfonline.org> and click on the big blue banner!**



ALASKAN AVIATION SAFETY FOUNDATION

C/O AVIATION TECHNOLOGY DIVISION UAA

2811 MERRILL FIELD DR.

ANCHORAGE, AK 99501