

GET MORE ORGANIZED AND MORE SAFE

BY: DAVE FITZPATRICK

The phone rang as I sat working at my desk yesterday. It was one of my clients with a harrowing story to tell me.

He had just returned home after landing his aircraft dead stick. While he was flying, the number one cylinder had split in two and destroyed the engine. Thanks to the training he had taken recently—both ground school and in-flight dual training—he knew exactly what to do. After immediately setting up for an emergency landing he brought his airplane to a smooth, safe landing at a nearby field.

Unfortunately, not all incidents conclude with such happy endings.

A pilot and his two passengers were killed recently when a Mooney M20J lost power and crashed. The Mooney had been in level flight at approximately 2000 feet AGL when the engine first lost power. The pilot apparently tried to stretch the glide to a paved road in a newly developed subdivision but stalled the aircraft and spiralled nose-down into the ground about 200 feet short of the road. This pilot had not taken any recent instruction.

In another incident, a Beech A23 Sundowner was damaged in a forced landing after the engine lost power during an approach. Investigators found the fuel selector on the left tank. Examination showed that the left tank was empty—but the right one contained 18 gallons of fuel. This pilot hadn't taken any recent training either.

Accidents like these continue to happen as long as pilots fail to keep themselves proficient and fail to practice safe flying habits.

The Sad Truth

As we're all aware, Transport Canada does not ask for our logs every year to make sure that we are flying the number of hours required by law. It is up to every individual pilot to make sure that we are proficient.

In my work as an aviation insurance broker, I see numerous pilot reports pass across my desk daily. These reports contain the total hours, ratings, endorsements, and any particular training recently completed by the individual pilot. Insurance companies require this information

to properly assess the qualifications of a pilot before offering them insurance.

It continues to amaze me how few pilots are really organized with their training and proficiency.

Get Yourself Organized

When was the last time you went for a check ride? When was the last time you did some instrument training? Given the new Transport Canada regulations, are you even legal to fly?

Maybe it's time to get organized and take becoming a safer pilot a little more seriously.

Start by getting your logbook updated to track your training and your hours—which is now mandatory by law.

To make your life even easier, there are now software programs available to help you do this. They can track your flight time, training, proficiency, and even aircraft maintenance expenses.

With very little time and expense you can set up a system to keep your records organized. Even more importantly, doing this will remind you to get out there and keep improving your skills and becoming a safer pilot.



DAVE FITZPATRICK IS AN AIRCRAFT OWNER, PILOT AND THE PRESIDENT OF AIR 1 INSURANCE. HE OFFERS FREE AVIATION INSURANCE REVIEWS TO THOSE THAT CALL HIM AT 1-888-917-1177.