

FLYING LESSONS for March 10, 2011

suggested by this week's aircraft mishap reports

FLYING LESSONS uses the past week's 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 make and model airplane have little direct bearing on the possible causes of aircraft accidents, so apply these *FLYING LESSONS* to any 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.

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This week's lessons:

We've got a lot of material to cover in our final review of the ninth most common cause of fatal general aviation mishaps, thanks to some great comments from *FLYING LESSONS* readers. So we'll break from the usual format this week to cover this critical topic. Read on...



Top 10 Causes of Fatal General Aviation Accidents Cause #9: Low Altitude Maneuvering in Areas of Obstacles

In early February *FLYING LESSONS* posted synopses of the mishaps that together make up the ninth most common cause of fatal general aviation mishaps, as reported by the FAA. Several readers provided very insightful comments. I've listed their comments, verbatim, beneath each applicable scenario description and highlighted some *LESSONS* they derived as a result. I've then made comments of my own.

Last month *FLYING LESSONS* offered a couple sample lesson plans to help instructors teach skills helpful for avoiding a repeat of accident history. I'll continue to do so for future cause breakdowns, but at least for Cause #9 there are no clear, objective *LESSONS* around which to build an FAA-style lesson plan. Instead, the scenarios when taken together point to a cultural problem in the mindset of many aviators. Instructors and educators are encouraged to review the scenarios and quiz students on possible contributors, then use these reader comments to drive the point home that it is pilot attitude, not stick-and-rudder skill alone, that determines the safe outcome of a flight.

As my friend, aviation ethicist and researcher and *FLYING LESSONS* reader Dr. Bill Rhodes says, "Every one of these guys met the practical test standards" for a pilot certificate, at least at one point. There is no clearer illustration of the fact that the PTS represent a *minimum* standard of safety that considering each of these scenarios, and the comments that follow, with that thought in mind.

Let's review, then, specific scenarios that contribute to the ninth most common cause of fatal general aviation accidents, the comments of *FLYING LESSONS* readers, and some observations to wrap up this discussion...on the Mastery Flight Training website.

See www.mastery-flight-training.com

Share safer skies. Forward *FLYING LESSONS* to a friend.

Fly safe, and have fun!

Thomas P. Turner, M.S. Aviation Safety, MCFI
2010 National FAA Safety Team Representative of the Year
2008 FAA Central Region CFI of the Year



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