

# Risk Management Decision Path



**PERCEIVE**  
HAZARDS  
associated with:

- Pilot
- Aircraft
- enVironment
- External Factors

**PROCESS**  
RISK LEVEL  
by assessing:

- Consequences
- Alternatives
- Reality
- External Factors

**PERFORM**  
RISK  
MANAGEMENT  
by deciding whether to:

- Transfer
- Eliminate
- Accept
- Mitigate



Federal Aviation  
Administration

## Practical Risk Management for Local VFR Flying

For additional information go to:  
[faasafety.gov](http://faasafety.gov)



For questions about aviation safety,  
contact:

Your Local  
Federal Aviation Administration  
Flight Standards District Office

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## PURPOSE



Day VFR conditions are a great time to fly for fun and practice. There may not appear to be much risk involved in flying a known air-

craft in familiar surroundings, but complacency can be the biggest hazard of all. This guide focuses on teaching ways to manage risk common to recreational flying.

## PROFILE

Accidents that occur with local flying in day VFR conditions often involve poor planning, decision-making, and risk management in areas such as:

- Operating rules & procedures
- Checklist use
- Basic airplane control
- Inadequate preflight inspection
- Fuel management
- No weather briefing
- Poor traffic scan
- “Just this once” mentality
- Fear of disappointing passengers

## PRACTICES

If the pilot you are training is mostly a local flyer, you might structure the flight review as a “\$100 hamburger” trip to a nearby airport.

### Sample Scenarios:

1. Assigning a familiar destination offers insight into how the pilot prepares for an “easy” flight:

- Does the pilot get a weather briefing?
- Is there a VFR flight plan?
- Are the charts current?
- How much fuel is “enough?”
- Did the pilot calculate performance?
- Is terrain a factor?
- Does the pilot recognize hazards?



2. Asking the pilot to file a VFR flight plan or to request flight following will let you evaluate competence

in ATC procedures. It is also a good risk management habit.

3. Use a reduced throttle setting to simulate partial power and divert the flight to an unfamiliar airport. Look for a field that highlights the importance of good planning and current charts (e.g., a shorter or narrower runway, or a different traffic pattern. These scenarios will provide a number of “teachable moments” on abnormal procedures, systems knowledge, situational awareness,

For each scenario that you encounter or create, ask the pilot to use the Perceive-Process-Perform decision path to think it through. For instance:

### Perceive:

- Partial power loss is a hazard.
- What additional hazards arise with respect to pilot (stress); environment (terrain); and external pressures (concern about cost of off-field landing).

### Process:

- What are the consequences of continuing to the planned destination?
- What are the available alternatives?
- How serious is the problem?

### Perform:

- How can you mitigate the risk of total engine failure?
- What might let you accept the risk of continuing to the nearest airport?

## POSTFLIGHT

While you are enjoying the \$100 hamburger, start the postflight discussion by asking for the pilot’s view of the flight. Letting the pilot in training speak first will give you insight on his or her decision-making skills. Also, asking questions will help the pilot learn by reflecting on his or her actions. For example:

- What went well?
- What would you do differently if you have a similar problem in the future?