

# Cold Weather Ops



## On the Ground

### Be prepared:

- Are there services at the airport I'm flying to?
- Will I be able to find shelter there, if necessary?
- Has the airport had snow recently?
- Is the runway open and cleared?
- Am I night current and proficient?
- If IFR, are MEAs near my airplane's service ceiling?

### Dress warmly:

- Consider temps en route, not just at departure/destination
- Bring a hat—uncovered heads lose a lot of heat
- Mittens keeps hands warmer than gloves
- Leave room in baggage area for extra clothing

### Be prepared to survive a forced landing:

- File and activate a flight plan
- Carry a survival kit
- In severe conditions, stay with the aircraft (if practical)
- Consider bringing a personal locator beacon (PLB)
- Carry a cell phone

### Get your airplane ready:

- Check tire pressures (you lose 1 lb. for each 10° change)
- Install air intake block-off plates, if you have them
- Check strut condition/inflation
- Consider removing wheelpants
- Install a carbon monoxide detector

### Preflight carefully:

- Be alert for signs of frozen water in fuel tanks
- Remove ALL snow, ice, and frost from wing/tail surfaces
- Check notams

### Take pity on your engine:

- Preheating makes starting easier and prevents wear
- Over-priming can lead to fire

### Take care when taxiing:

- Watch wing clearance on snow mounds
- Avoid puddles and areas of heavy slush

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## **In the Air**

### **Icing is deadly and unpredictable:**

- It degrades aircraft performance in multiple ways
- Icing forecasts are sometimes inaccurate or overly cautious
- Icing is not exclusively a northern phenomenon
- Ice layers are sometimes a lot thicker than "normal"
- Help others: Give pilot reports (including "negative icing" reports)
- IF YOU HAVE AN ICE PROBLEM, TELL ATC

### **Don't overestimate the capabilities of non-certified aircraft:**

- Do everything possible to steer clear of icing
- Don't rely too heavily on "non-hazard" anti-icing systems

### **Remember limitations of certified aircraft:**

- Don't forget to turn pitot heat ON
- Boots should be cycled periodically
- In weeping wing systems, be aware of fluid level, flow rate
- Start fluid before you encounter ice

### **Be realistic about escape routes:**

- If you turn around, how far will you have to go?
- How high will you have to climb?
- Will your airplane be able to make that climb with a load of ice?
- Remember: The worst ice is often at the top of the cloud layer
- Will the MEA allow a descent to warmer air?
- START LOOKING FOR ESCAPE ROUTES AT THE FIRST SIGN OF ICE

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