



SAFETYGRAM

October 2015

I recently heard a friend say, “Poor guy...If he didn’t have bad luck, he wouldn’t have any luck at all.” For some reason that saying kept going through my mind as we looked back on Fiscal Year 2015’s aircraft events that resulted in bent, broken, or scratched metal. Thankfully, all the people involved walked away from each of these, which is a testament to the Aero Club program’s overall safety record. While it seems impossible to simply point at human error or mechanical issues in every case; it would be equally naïve to just chalk everything up to bad luck. Over my years of flying, I’ve found that my level of preparedness for any given flight generally seems to determine the type of outcome (or “luck”) I get when things don’t go according to plan. That’s not always the case, but seems true more often than not.

As you look through this list of FY15 events, try not to focus on passing judgment about how somebody else messed up. I’ve found little value in that over the years. Instead, think about what you might do when the completely unexpected happens to you – like what happened to these folks. If that kind of thing hasn’t happened to you yet, it will someday. Setting personal limits (and sticking with them) combined with good emergency procedure training are the best ways to prepare for strange occurrence in flight or on the ground. That type of preparation allows you to stay calm, run the checklist, and exercise good judgment.

So here’s the list:

- Member experienced loss of oil pressure/engine failure at 7000’ cruise; safe power off landing. On post flight inspection, mechanic discovered oil plug improperly safety wired resulting in loss of engine oil.
- C-182 RG nose gear unsafe indication. Checklists completed; tower observed “nose gear appears to be down.” Soft field landing technique used, but nose gear still collapsed due to mechanical failure.
- One blade prop strike discovered by member on preflight inspection. Unknown how it happened...
- Two aircraft experienced hard landing, balloon, & porpoise resulting in damage and prop strikes in both cases.
- Aircraft experienced engine RPM fluctuations (same A/C, two separate sorties 6 mos apart). Both cases declared an emergency and executed a safe landing. MX found small cylinder crack after second event.

- Rough running engine on takeoff; executed a 180 and landed safely. Flat-spotted tires during brake application.
- Tail struck partially opened hangar door when pulling aircraft out for flight.
- Prop struck tow bar during MX engine run.
- Wing tip scraped runway on crosswind landing.
- Wing tip light struck a parked vehicle during taxi.

Again, I don't find any real value in pointing fingers at people. Instead take the time to think about what you might do in any similar situation if you find yourself in one. First off, how could you get into that situation to begin with? In so many cases, the "ounce of prevention" is worth far more than the "pound of cure." There's also usually a way out of most bad situations that involves staying calm, running applicable checklists, and applying good judgment...please take a look and discuss practical applications during your safety meeting.

So that was the bad news for FY15. Here's the good news: the overall safety record for Aero Clubs remains roughly 3 times better than General Aviation at large. That's largely due to the quality of our members and the training they receive...and the good judgment they usually exercise. Thanks to your dedication and attention, Aero Clubs continue to set the benchmark in GA for safety. Let's keep getting better!

FLY SAFELY!



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