



SAFETY GRAM

December 2019

There isn't an NTSB accident report to review this month, instead, I'm going to share a two experiences from when I was an Aero Club Manager. While they might seem baffling, they are true stories.

Case 1: It was a bright sunny day when Pilot A showed up 30 minutes early to complete his weight and balance and dispatch the aircraft. He preflighted the aircraft and took off for a local flight and pattern work. Approximately 10 minutes after takeoff, the pilot was back in the Aero Club reporting that the airspeed indicator was inoperative. My Chief Flight instructor and I asked several questions about his preflight procedures and what happened in the air. The pilot reported the airspeed indicator never "came alive" but took off anyway thinking it would change. The three of us walked back to the aircraft to look at it while he fueled, only to find the pitot cover still on the aircraft. The large "REMOVE BEFORE FLIGHT" flag was not, in fact, removed before flight.

Case 2: Pilot B had been taking the Socata Trinidad regularly on local flights to get lunch. On this particular flight, he planned to fly to Livermore then return a few hours later. All seemed to go well until he returned with the airplane. After fueling, our mechanic was helping him pull it back in the hangar when our mechanic, very startled, asked, "WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PROPELLOR?" The pilot shrugged and mentioned he felt some vibration during the flight home but noted no anomalies. The mechanic noted ½ inch of missing metal on each blade tip on the propeller. The pilot had no explanation for what happened with the propeller.

The mechanic and I knew something must have happened during his flight and/or landing so we decided to review the ATC recordings from the tower at Livermore. After returning to the aircraft after lunch he requested to taxi for takeoff. He received approval and began heading towards the runway. Shortly after, the pilot asked the tower to check his front tire to see if it was flat since he had trouble steering. The tower came back and said, "No, sir, your tow bar is still attached to the nose wheel" (Cue my mouth drop). The pilot reportedly hopped out of the airplane, removed the tow bar, got back in and continued to taxi for takeoff.

What we know now is that the pilot taxied with the tow bar still attached to the nose wheel, through a drainage dip, where the tow bar bounced up into the prop. This lapse

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in judgement and lack of checklist usage during preflight cost the insurance fund over \$25K.

Bottom line: Use the checklists for every flight, it's required and the only way to ensure you're doing everything during every flight.

Discussion Questions:

- What does AFMAN 34-152 6.6 say about checklist usage?
- During preflight procedures, if a required item happens to fail, what are your next steps?
- Discuss how both instances were preventable with proper checklist usage
- Reference: ["More Than A List"](#) by Jamie Beckett

CONTINUE TO FLY SAFE!