

Cross Country Preparation and Checklist

May 18, 2005

Early Planning

- Starting airport
- Destination airport
- Passenger and baggage weight and approximate possible fuel load
- Intermediate stops and/or fuel stops, if needed
- Alternate airports chosen based on weather and terrain
- Survival equipment required based on terrain and season
- Basic route of flight
- Choice of cruise altitude based on hemispherical rule, forecast winds, and safety
- Emergency preparation – engine failure, lost communication, electrical/navigation failure

Navigation Log

- Each starting and ending point should really be a point, not “abeam” or “near” something
- Separate climb leg(s)
- Separate descent leg(s)
- Components for each leg
 - Computed/entered during planning
 - Starting point (position and altitude)
 - Ending point (position and altitude)
 - Navigation means (pilotage, dead reckoning, VOR, etc.) with details including frequency and Morse ID
 - True course
 - Leg length in NM
 - Estimated Approach/Center contact frequency
 - Computed/entered on day of flight using winds aloft forecast
 - Forecast winds and temperatures
 - True airspeed
 - Estimated magnetic heading (wind corrected)
 - Estimated groundspeed (wind corrected)
 - Estimated time enroute (using estimated groundspeed)
 - Estimated fuel consumed and remaining
- Airport information for starting airport, each stop, and each alternate
 - Elevation
 - Frequencies (ATIS, tower, ground, clearance delivery, CTAF, UNICOM)
 - Runway numbers, lengths, and widths
 - Fuel availability
 - Flight Service Station contact frequencies
 - Approach/Center contact frequencies
 - Landing plan
 - Pattern entry
 - Taxi diagram
 - Parking location

Chart Knowledge for Route

- Airspace, including communication and cloud clearance requirements
- Special use airspace (MOA, restricted, alert, etc.)
- Obstacles and terrain

Aircraft Performance

- Takeoff performance at each airport using worst-case weather conditions + 50% margin of safety
- Landing performance at each airport using worst-case weather conditions + 50% margin of safety
- Weight and balance with appropriate passengers, baggage, and fuel for *actual airplane used*
- Weight and balance with appropriate passengers and baggage, but *empty fuel* for *actual airplane used*

Flight Plan – In This Order

- Flight plan type (VFR)
- Aircraft ID and type *with equipment suffix*
- True* airspeed *for cruise flight*
- Departure point
- Proposed departure time (zulu)
- Cruising altitude
- Route of flight using airports or VORs
- Estimated time enroute *with 20 minute margin of error added*
- Remarks (e.g. actual route of flight – “follow I-80 eastbound”)
- Fuel on board *in hours and minutes*
- Alternate airports, if any
- Pilot’s name, address, telephone number, and aircraft home base airport
- Number of people on board, including the pilot
- Color of aircraft (primary plus trim)
- Destination contact, if any

On Day of Flight

- Update navigation log with winds aloft forecast
- Standard weather briefing, including all relevant NOTAMs
- Investigation of TFRs, including major sports games
- Make final go/no-go decision
- File flight plans

During Flight

- Open flight plan
- Follow navigation log
- Update navigation log as appropriate and forecast changes to time and fuel
- Close flight plan at destination

List of Items to Bring to a Phase Check or Checkride

- Terminal and sectional charts with course marked in highlighter
- Completed navigation log including current forecast winds
- Full weather briefing, preferably a full DUATS printout with relevant items highlighted
- Weight and balance information
- Takeoff and landing performance information