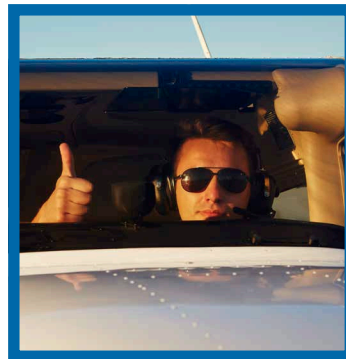




# On Approach

Avemco® Policyholder News

Spring 2022



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# TIME FOR A SPRING TUNE-UP (FOR YOU, NOT YOUR AIRPLANE)

*By Jim Gorman, 2,600 Hour Instrument-Rated Commercial Pilot, Single Engine Land and Sea, Private Glider*

Unless you live in the sunbelt, you probably don't fly a whole lot in the winter. I'm certainly in that category. The plane may perform better in cold weather, but I don't. Then, in the part of the country where I live, there's the challenge of simply finding a decent weather day. Weeks can pass between visits to the airport. And I know I'm not alone. The reason I know this is because the first nice spring day at my nearby fly-in restaurant is a madhouse. Every pilot seems to have come out of hibernation on the same day and made a beeline for the airport.

Please indulge me while I tell you what you already know but may not consciously be thinking about. You know that even experienced pilots get rusty fast when they haven't flown for several weeks or months. But subconsciously, we all believe that doesn't apply to us. The other guys are the ones we need to watch out for in the pattern. To make sure that we're not one of the other guys, I'd like to make some suggestions.

I'm not going to tell you to grab an instructor. If you're the kind of pilot who believes in recurrent training, you're already way ahead of me on that. But if you are like most pilots, you only see a CFI when you need a signoff on your biennial.

So, I'm going to propose the next best thing to spending time with a CFI.

My first suggestion isn't even to go flying. It's to spend some time on the ground thinking about flying, possibly not even in the airplane. When was the last time you flipped through the POH of the plane you own or rent, recalling V-speeds, maximum crosswind component, weight, balance, etc.? Although those are all things you feel you know by heart, the knowledge may be buried deep in your memory and needs to be teased to the surface. Some of that time on the ground should be spent getting to know your GPS again. I speak from experience when I say that it is fantastic and a little frightening how much I forget about programming and even operating my GPS after a winter. Insurance company claim sheets are filled with pilots who taxied into lights or other airplanes or worse while fiddling with their electronic avionics, let alone the disasters and near disasters that can occur in the air. This self-induced ground school is even more critical if you have any sort of glass panel, whether it's a simple G5, the more robust GI275, an Aspen, or on up to a G3X or G1000. The amount of information these displays give you can easily be overwhelming, turning them from a technological marvel to a dangerous hindrance.

If you choose not to fly with a CFI to help you get up to speed, then take a pilot buddy with you as a safety pilot for a flight or two. Ask them to look for traffic, work the radios, help with the checklist, remind you to raise or lower flaps, and



do the other things that professionals expect their copilots to do to lessen the workload. If they're the kind of friend who can be honest with you and if you're the kind of friend who won't be insulted if they are, ask them to critique your flying. It's always good to have an objective pilot in the cockpit.

Finally, I'm going to suggest that you put some additional thought into what else you can do to get back into the groove. Desktop simulator? YouTube videos? Diving into your favorite aviation magazine again? There are many ways to become the pilot you were before winter set in. And just as important to make sure that your time in the air is all fun and no frustration.

*Jim Gorman is an instrument-rated commercial pilot with glider and seaplane ratings and more than 2,600 hours in the air. He flies a Beechcraft F33-A Bonanza and is the owner of Gorman360, Inc., an advertising agency. When not busy making sure his plane is in tip-top shape, he volunteers for Pilots N Paws and other humanitarian organizations.*

# TAXIING - ONE OF THE FIRST SKILLS YOU LEARNED



## *Why do many pilots get into trouble when taxiing along a runway?*

Part of the answer is revealed in the statistics we have examined.<sup>1</sup> The most dangerous time for pilots isn't when they're students, but long after they have obtained their license. The longer we fly, the longer nothing goes wrong, and the more confident we get, until complacency sets in, and one becomes just a little too confident.

This is true for taxiing, as well as all other phases of flight. We will address the initial phase here.

Avemco Insurance Company defines a taxi loss as "one that occurs anytime an airplane incurs damage or loss while moving under its own power on an airport other than in the process of taking off or landing".

Please note these comments and statistics are from the Avemco claims files, *not from NTSB or FAA records*.

- Taxi losses seldom happen to pilots with less than 50 total hours. New pilots are typically very cautious pilots. They are on alert for everything. And what they don't want to do is bend up an airplane. Plus, they're often in the airplane with an instructor. Two sets of eyes are better than one; if the student gets distracted, the instructor is there to stop the airplane before there is a problem.
- Once pilots pass the 50-hour point, and until they have about 2,500 total flight hours, taxi

mishaps account for about 11% of all claims for this pilot experience group. At around 50 hours, many pilots pass the Private or Sport Pilot checkride. Then they're on their own. That feeling of self-satisfaction or contentment starts to replace anxiety. And there's usually no longer a CFI in the right seat.

- Interestingly enough, **the taxi mishap rate increases to 13% for pilots with more than 2,500 hours total time**. Why? You guessed it - most likely complacency. Experienced pilots may try to run checklists while they are taxiing, causing a division of attention that leads to a collision or taxiway excursion. Someone who has flown this much is probably in an airplane equipped

with a GPS or even a full glass cockpit. The distractions of advanced panel equipment may cause the pilot to focus inside the airplane. If the aircraft is in motion at the time, and no one is looking outside, it's far more likely to run off the pavement or collide with an object. And by an object, we mean four-legged critters too!

The taxi loss record by time-in-type also follows the trends noted above. Pilots who have less than 50 hours in make and model have the lowest rate of taxi mishaps. They are probably not comfortable enough yet with the airplane to let their eyes and minds wander during taxi. The rate of taxi claims goes up when the pilot has 50 to 100 hours in make and model, probably an indication that a bit of confidence has started to set in. The pilot who logs more than 100, but less than 500 hours in type, has a moderate, but still reasonably low rate of taxi claims. With more than 500 hours in type, you may fall into the trap of multi-tasking and an avionics distraction causes the taxi-rate loss to soar.

### How can you avoid taxi mishaps?

Make it *your top priority* to pay attention to what you're doing, keep your head out of the cockpit, and continuously remind yourself to focus on taxiing and nothing else. Avemco statistics show that pilots who program the GPS or run checklists while the airplane is in motion have a far higher rate of taxi collisions than their level of experience would suggest.

Every time you step into the cockpit, think about your mindset when you had less than 50 hours, and when you were cautious. You checked and even double-checked everything. It will help you avoid such avoidable accidents in the future.

<sup>1</sup>Editor's Note: All statistics are from Avemco claims experience as of 10/2019 and are not from the FAA or the NTSB.



#### **Flight Safety Detectives**

Avemco is also a major sponsor of *Flight Safety Detectives*, a compelling podcast presented by two world-renowned aviation industry consultants, Greg Feith and John Goglia, who offer the ultimate insider view of everything to do with aviation safety. *Flight Safety Detectives* will take you behind-the-scenes to review the facts and little-known details on deadly air crashes and issues impacting general aviation and the commercial airline industry.

#### **I Learned About Flying From That (ILAFFT) By Flying Magazine**

Avemco is the exclusive sponsor of Flying Magazine's brand new *I Learned About Flying From That (ILAFFT)* podcast. *ILAFFT* has been Flying's most popular magazine feature for more than 70 years and for the first time, it's being brought to life with stories directly from the mouths of the folks who have narrowly escaped disaster and lived to become better pilots because of it. Twice a month, veteran air show announcer, entertainer, and pilot, Rob Reider will talk with another pilot who has learned about flying from getting into a bad situation. They will share their experiences, lessons learned, and answer questions that often don't get asked in the printed columns.

Subscribe to both podcasts on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, or Google.

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This webinar qualifies for Basic Knowledge-Level 3 - 1 credit in the FAA Wings Pilot Proficiency Program and the Avemco Safety Rewards Program.\*

Gene will also be popping up at several local aviation events in upstate New York in the following months! To read about these events, go to [www.vectorsforsafety.com](http://www.vectorsforsafety.com)

\*Premium credits subject to policy terms and underwriting guidelines.

# READBACK

Readback is your chance to tell us what you think about everything we have to say and do - including our PIREPs, articles, emails and previous issues of the *On Approach* newsletter. Content has been or may be edited for length and style before publication.

## RESPONSES TO MEG GODLEWSKI'S "HOOD TIME FOR THE PPI : IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE, IT'S COMMON SENSE

This is a must-read for all of us. Twice while flying VFR I have lost visibility. Once was a winter-time white-out over the Bay of Green Bay which was a total loss of visibility. In the other case the loss of visibility was everywhere but down. This was caused by a very low cloud layer associated with a front. Both situations required switching to instrument flight to find my way to VFR conditions.

My flying training had included considerable time under the hood in actual airplanes.

--Chris

This is a great article, well written, to the point. I am a CFII in the Seattle area, and this is exactly what I teach for the same reasons as the author

stated. Avemco is also my insurance company.

--George Futas, CFII

Kudos to you for an excellent article. As a non-instrument rated commercial pilot flying skydivers, having the ability, in an emergency, to navigate to VFR conditions and land can be a life-saver.

--Brian Knight

Excellent article! I truly believe that getting a little time in IMC should be part of FAR Part 61.109 requirements. Thank you!

--Mona

Excellent. More please. Great length. Perhaps you can develop into a string of short topical essays that build a desire to fly these topics with a CFII to 'try some aspect out'. The more I fly longish CC VFR, the more I see the need for some sort of IFR-lite recurring exposure as a proficient pilot. In practice it is way more intimidating mentally to find/approach a CFII than it should be. Something I am working to overcome. PP. ASEL. 450+ hrs. VFR. Own plane. Feel very capable VFR. Two runs at IFR training and a lot of reading and seminars. Learning continues! Thank you.

--Thomas Kennedy

Great article and perspective on hood time for VFR, especially flying an approach to home airport!

--Daniel E. Little, MS, DVM



*Photos courtesy of devoted Avemco customer, Louis Malinchak*



## RESPONSE TO JIM GORMAN'S "A GOLDFINGER PLANE LIVES ON"

Regarding the movie Goldfinger, I think when one of the Cherokee pilots radioed "Speed 2-2-0" she must have meant in kilometers per hour. If so, then her cruise speed translates to just shy of 120 knots which would be realistic for a Cherokee.

--Ali Behravesh - Based at Napa County Airport, California

# COMING TO A HANGAR NEAR YOU!

The most fun we have all year is meeting you in person and strengthening our ties within the aviation community.

Avemco will be exhibiting at the following aviation tradeshow and more in 2022:

**MAY 6-8**  
Great Alaska Aviation Gathering  
Alaska State Fairgrounds  
Palmer, AK  
**Booth #89**

**SEPTEMBER 9-10**  
AOPA Fly In - The Hangout  
Felts Field (KSFF)  
Spokane WA  
**Booth # TBD**

**JUNE 16-17**  
AOPA Aviator Showcase  
Ft Worth (KAFW) Alliance Airport  
Ft Worth TX  
**Booth #52**

**NOVEMBER 4-5**  
AOPA Fly In - The Hangout  
Tampa Executive Airport (KVDF)  
Tampa FL  
**Booth # TBD**

**JULY 25-31**  
EAA AirVenture  
Oshkosh, WI  
**Booth #1158**

Events subject to change. Please visit our website and follow us on social media for more information and updates on these events as they become available.

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Avemco Policyholder News

SPRING 2022

## On Approach

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