



Transition Training

The lack of transition training has been cited as a causal factor in many general aviation accidents. Although pilots think of transition training as necessary when stepping up to a high performance or complex airplane; or from single-engine to multi-engine; or from tricycle gear to tail wheel, it is also beneficial to pilots who are moving from traditional aircraft to amateur built or light sport flying machines. Whether a pilot is transitioning to a higher- or lower-performance aircraft, or even a different model, a sound transition training program should involve:

Structure

Transition training should be conducted in accordance with a written training syllabus. Think of the syllabus as a checklist for training. As with an aircraft checklist, the syllabus provides a logical, systematic, and comprehensive approach to ensuring that you cover all the basics. It is also helpful to review the applicable certification standards documents like the practical test standards (PTS), or airman certification standards (ACS) which are expected to replace PTS later in 2016. These documents list the flight proficiency standards appropriate for the certificate and/or rating that the transitioning pilot holds.

Specifics

Transition training is intended to teach the pilot what is different about the aircraft or its installed equipment (e.g., avionics). The syllabus should thus address basic characteristics of the aircraft's systems (e.g., fuel, electrical, control, hydraulic, avionics, environmental, etc.), but with emphasis on how characteristics of the new aircraft differ from those in aircraft the pilot has already flown. It should cover normal, abnormal, and

emergency procedures. The syllabus should also cover performance characteristics, including what to expect on takeoff and landing, climb, cruise, descent, and glide. Finally, it must address limitations, such as weight and balance, speeds, wind limits, etc.

Qualified Instructor

To get the greatest benefit from your transition training, you need to hire an instructor who is current, qualified, and thoroughly knowledgeable about the airplane and/or equipment you want to master. The instructor should conduct your training in accordance with a comprehensive training syllabus. While it is important to cover all the material, a good instructor will have the ability to change the arrangement of the subject matter and/or shift the emphasis to fit the qualifications of the transitioning pilot, the characteristics of the aircraft or equipment involved, the circumstances of the training environment, and the goals of the transitioning pilot.

Learn More

- Advisory Circular 90-109, Airmen Transition to Experimental or Unfamiliar Airplanes - <http://go.usa.gov/3XguP>
- Transitioning to Other Airplanes, AOPA Online Course - www.aopa.org/lms/courses/transitioning/
- FAA Safety Briefing, March/April 2014 issue - http://1.usa.gov/FAA_ASB