



General Aviation Survival

Many general aviation (GA) accidents are survivable if you have the right equipment and employ the right techniques. For example in Alaska, adding seatbelts — especially four- or five-point seatbelts — and helmets could save 60 percent of the lives involved in an aircraft accident. Are you prepared and do you have the tools you need to survive an aviation accident?

Survival Tips

Every pilot needs to prepare for the unexpected. Although surviving a crash is one of those “I hope it never happens” events, it’s something you need to consider both for yourself, and your passengers.

Accidents can happen quickly so being prepared is key. Three factors will impact your ability to survive: **knowledge**, **discipline**, and **planning**. Here are some quick tips to remember:

- ◆ Know your aircraft. Do you know which way your seatbelt unbuckles? Have you checked your seatbelt placement to ensure it’s unobstructed during an emergency?
- ◆ Upgrade your equipment. Installing four- or five-point seatbelts and using a helmet might save your life. Also, fire prevention fuel tank inserts can significantly reduce the chance of a post impact fire.
- ◆ Within the first five minutes of landing, exit the

aircraft and account for the occupants. Check for breathing, bleeding, and injuries in this order. Activate your ELT (and personal locator beacon if you have one), and use your phone to call 911.

- ◆ Know what roads are along your route and what direction they are in.
- ◆ File a flight plan even when flying VFR. This enables flight tracking and means that emergency services will be alerted should you not arrive when expected.
- ◆ Don’t panic. Calm, thoughtful action is what will help you survive the time until you’re rescued.
- ◆ Most importantly, have the will to survive!



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Survival Training

To have the best chances of surviving an accident, the FAA recommends supplementing what you've learned on survival techniques with training and preparation. A number of courses are available, including a one-day post-crash survival course tailored for GA pilots offered by the FAA Civil Aerospace Medical Institute (CAMI).

This course, and others like it, are designed to introduce you to the knowledge and skills you need to cope with various common survival scenarios. This course also teaches students how to assemble and use a personal survival kit. Go to 1.usa.gov/1LetIK6 for more information.

Survival Kit

No matter where you fly, you should always equip your aircraft with a survival kit. There are several that are available commercially, but you can also assemble a personal survival kit that is custom-tailored to your mission.

Some common items you'll want to make sure you have in your aircraft include:

- ⇒ multi-tool or knife
- ⇒ flashlight with extra batteries
- ⇒ rope
- ⇒ a signaling device
- ⇒ a compass
- ⇒ first aid kit
- ⇒ waterproof matches
- ⇒ bug repellent
- ⇒ work gloves

Be sure to have some water and non-perishable food as well in case you might have to wait some time before being rescued. Carrying some of these items in a fishing or survival vest is a good idea as you may only be able to walk away from the aircraft with the



clothes on your back. And don't forget to leave room in your vest for a 406 MHz PLB. These relatively low cost devices are a great adjunct to the aircraft's ELT.

Speaking of clothing, this is one area often overlooked when it comes to surviving an aircraft accident. As clothing is your primary shelter in a survival situation, plan your attire accordingly for all areas and weather conditions along your route of flight. Dressing in layers is always a good idea. That way you can adjust as conditions change. Consider cotton or wool outer garments rather than synthetics, trousers rather than shorts or skirts, and closed toe shoes rather than sandals.

Survival Resources

- ◆ *FAA Safety Briefing: Be Prepared* (Jul/Aug 2013) <http://1.usa.gov/1NhfyY> and *Handling Abnormal and Emergency Situations* (Nov/Dec 2010) <https://go.usa.gov/xnqxa>
- ◆ Basic Survival Training 1-Day Course at CAMI <http://1.usa.gov/1LetIK6>
- ◆ "Basic Survival Skills for Aviation" CAMI Manual <http://1.usa.gov/1VBPQ2t>
- ◆ Aircrew Survival Videos Playlist on YouTube <http://bit.ly/1Pl8gox>
- ◆ "Off Airport Ops Guide" FAASTeam Brochure <https://go.usa.gov/xnqxT>
- ◆ AOPA Air Safety Institute: Survival Safety <http://bit.ly/1VBQehn>

