



## General Aviation Survival Tips and Techniques

The General Aviation Joint Safety Committee (GAJSC) feels that improved survival planning before flight, along with survival training, can significantly improve pilots' chances of surviving accidents and incidents, based on the committee's study. Are you prepared, and do you have the tools you need to survive an aviation accident? Let's look at some tips, techniques, and training resources.

### Be Prepared

Every pilot needs to prepare for the unexpected. Surviving an accident is 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 guidelines to keep in mind:

- ◆ *Know your aircraft.* For example, do you know which way your seatbelt unbuckles? Also be sure your passengers are aware of where emergency equipment is and how to use it.
- ◆ *Upgrade your equipment.* Consider installing four- or five-point seatbelts for added safety. Also, fire prevention fuel tank inserts can significantly reduce the chance of a post impact fire.
- ◆ *After landing, immediately 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.



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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. Several courses are available, including a one-day post-accident 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 [bit.ly/41c7dS6](http://bit.ly/41c7dS6) 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
- ⇒ signaling device
- ⇒ compass
- ⇒ first aid kit
- ⇒ waterproof matches
- ⇒ insect repellent
- ⇒ work gloves
- ⇒ tarp
- ⇒ emergency blanket
- ⇒ rain poncho

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)  
[bit.ly/FAASB-JulAug2013](http://bit.ly/FAASB-JulAug2013)
- ◆ "What Would MacGyver Do?" *FAA Safety Briefing*, Jul/Aug 2013, Page 10  
[bit.ly/FAASB-JulAug2013](http://bit.ly/FAASB-JulAug2013)
- ◆ FAA Global Survival Videos Series on YouTube  
[bit.ly/3DkFd7c](http://bit.ly/3DkFd7c)
- ◆ "Off Airport Ops Guide" FAASTeam Brochure  
[bit.ly/4ibwQd8](http://bit.ly/4ibwQd8)
- ◆ AOPA Air Safety Institute: Survival Safety  
[bit.ly/1VBQehn](http://bit.ly/1VBQehn)
- ◆ New Scoring System to Predict GA Accidents  
[bit.ly/4ifOSuF](http://bit.ly/4ifOSuF)

