

FLYING SAFETY WITH FLOATS

Flight preparations

Prepare yourself:

- Review rules for aircraft maneuvering on water: [Canadian Aviation Regulations \(CARs\) 602.20](#) and RAC 1.9 of the [Transport Canada Aeronautical Information Manual \(TC AIM\)](#)
- Think of yourself as both a sailor and a pilot
- Know your aircraft: be trained on type and current
- Don't forget insect repellent

Prepare the aircraft:

- Check that your fuel is clean, and that you have enough of it
- Pump the floats, note leaks, and repair if needed
- Bring:
 - life jackets
 - refueling hand pump, filters and fuses, paddle, float pump
 - survival gear
 - a couple of 50' x 1/2" wing lines and a 30' throw line
- Place a red-lined prop arc on floats, and a danger placard inside your doors



Prepare your flight plan:

- File your flight plans with air traffic control, the flight service station or/and share with a responsible person
- Do a thorough review of terminal area (VTA) and visual flight rules (VFR) charts to locate power lines
- Assess the forecast and allow for weather changes en route, at the destination and during the return trip
- Plan for daylight VFR, as float flying is day VFR flying
- Avoid pressing the weather and darkness
- Leave yourself an "out": have an alternate plan

Prepare for flight:

- During pre-flight, complete all the checklist items
- Make sure the load is secure and within limits
- Carry only approved external loads and keep wake turbulence in mind to avoid blanking your tail feathers

Departure

Before you leave:

- Do a passenger safety briefing
 - Include the location and use of life jackets, seat belts and door releases
- Note the wind and currents
- Plan engine start, cast off and takeoff before leaving the dock
- Know your takeoff distance requirements



TAKE FIVE... for safety

Five minutes reading
could save your life!



- Check for other aircraft, boats, deadheads and other floating debris
- When taxiing, don't bury the outside float in the upwind turn: allowing the aircraft to weathercock is the safest way
- Don't take off across the entrance to small bays or coves, as boats may suddenly appear

En route

Use these tips to stay on course:

- On track, on time—skillful map reading is a must
- Be weather wise
- Watch for other traffic and suitable forced landing areas
- Always leave yourself an out

Arrival

When you're ready to land, circle at least 3 times in order to:

- Assess the wind strength and direction
- Check the landing run area for floating obstacles, submerged deadheads and boaters
- Check the approach for obstructions, including trees, buildings and wires (usually between islands and the mainland)
- Check the departure area for obstructions
- Remember that landing distance doesn't guarantee enough takeoff distance
- Know your glassy water procedures

On the water:

- Observe the wind, current and other aircraft in the docking area
- Brief passengers on the unloading procedure, particularly the "prop strike" threat
- Be wary of "helpful" individuals on board and ashore

Once you've completed your flight, **be sure to close your flight plan.**

Top 10 things that happen during takeoff and landing

Here are the top 10 occurrences that relate directly to the pilot, and happen most often during takeoff and landing:

1. Engine failure or malfunction, usually from fuel mismanagement
2. Loss of control in flight (mush or stall) due to choosing an unsuitable takeoff or landing area, improper loading and overloading
3. Dragged wing, float or pod due to unfavorable wind or water conditions
4. Nose over: glassy water and too flat a hold-off attitude are often factors
5. Loss of control on the ground or in the water due to rough water and crosswinds
6. Hard landings caused by an improper landing flare, crosswind or glassy water
7. Collision with deadheads or other obstacles during takeoff or landing
8. Overrun due to excessive airspeed and not enough landing area
9. Wheels down on the water: this occurs with amphibious aircraft
10. Injuries from propeller contact, usually due to inattentive passenger handling or improper briefings

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