

CALLBACK

From NASA's Aviation Safety Reporting System



Issue 458

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What Would You Have Done?

This month, *CALLBACK* again offers the reader a chance to “interact” with the information given in a selection of ASRS reports. In “The First Half of the Story,” you will find report excerpts describing an event up to a point where a specific decision must be made or some immediate action must be taken. You may then exercise your own judgment to make a decision or determine a possible course of action that would best resolve the situation.

The selected ASRS reports may not give all the information you want, and you may not be experienced in the type of aircraft involved, but each incident should give you a chance to refine your aviation judgment and decision-making skills. In “The Rest of the Story...” you will find the actions that were taken by reporters in response to each situation. Bear in mind that their decisions may not necessarily represent the best course of action, and there may not be a “right” answer. Our intent is to stimulate thought, training, and discussion related to the type of incidents that were reported.

The First Half of the Story

Get out of My Way C152 Pilot's Report

■ *While cruising at a VFR altitude of 4,500 feet, the engine experienced a sudden, rapid, and unusual 500 RPM drop in power without input. ... I made the decision to land at the nearest airport. Center was providing VFR flight following and was notified of my situation. The procedure of verifying...correct engine control positions failed to increase RPM. The remaining engine output was sufficient to maintain altitude, but I judged it to be unreliable and opted to not reduce power for fear it would cause further undesirable operation. I was cleared to switch to CTAF and announced my intentions to land on the active runway. After slipping to lose excess altitude, it became apparent that a helicopter was on the [approach] end of the runway. I requested that he please move, [but I received] no response.*

What Would You Have Done?

Sliding Visibility PA46 Pilot's Report

■ *I had never experienced conditions [like this] in my life. It was CAVU, but due to the snowfall the night prior and gusty winds of 30+ knots, the blowing snow created visibility problems...on the surface. ... As I lined up [for takeoff], I was told that the RVR at...the [touchdown] end was around 2,400 feet and, at the rollout area, 4,000 feet. I asked how far down the runway I needed to obtain the better RVR and was told, “All the way to the end.”*

I was holding in position on the runway and was cleared for takeoff, but I decided to delay takeoff due to the visibility, so I told the Tower. Visibility was so poor on the ground that [Tower] had zero ability to tell where I was. I was told that I could hold in place, but that there was a Learjet on a 5-mile final, indicating that there was some urgency for my departure.

I [then] had a “break” in the weather and decided to give it a shot. As I accelerated, I lost visual [references] due to snow on the runway, [and] also lost my bearings.

What Would You Have Done?

Just One More C172 Flight Instructor's Report

■ *I was training a student who has approximately 30 hours and has soloed three times. We were doing a training flight in the traffic pattern working on short and soft field takeoffs and landings. For the short field landings, I was giving the scenario that a previous student of mine had received during his private pilot checkride. [His] examiner had wanted him to land on the threshold, so that is the same scenario that my student and I were practicing. We had performed nine takeoffs and landings, and he was doing very well with the spot landings and short field procedures.*

In the beginning, I was following...closely on the controls to ensure the proper threshold crossing height for the point where we were landing. As the lesson progressed, I eased off of the controls to allow him to be more in control. After the ninth landing, I knew it was about time to finish up for the evening. My student asked if we could do just one more takeoff and landing.

What Would You Have Done?

A Limit of Expertise A320 Captain's Report

■ The ATIS wind was reported at 280/11G19. The approach was normal and uneventful. At around 800 or 900 feet we had a little bit of a tailwind, but the wind was shifting in both direction and speed. The last wind that I saw was out of the west at maybe 6 to 8 knots. At less than 40 feet, somewhere around 30 feet, both the First Officer and I felt the plane start to sink a little. Not unusual...for the spring and summer. I increased the angle of attack to slow the sink rate and left the thrust in the climb detent to ensure an increase in thrust as I increased back pressure. At 20 feet the airplane was still sinking. I continued to increase back pressure and left the thrust in all the way to landing. The airplane was not responding to my control inputs, and...I felt the side stick hit the aft stop.

What Would You Have Done?

The Rest of the Story...

Get out of My Way C152 Pilot's Report

The Reporter's Action

■ Unsure of the plane's ability to climb during a go-around, I decided to land on the parallel taxiway that was clear of traffic and obstructions. I made an announcement on CTAF that we would land on the taxiway. Unsure of the helicopter's intentions on the runway, I asked that he depart to the right and away from the taxiway. A slightly faster than normal landing was made without aircraft damage.

Contacting CTAF [had been] delayed by a few seconds because we did not have the CTAF frequency.... My passenger was another pilot and was trying to tune [CTAF] while I...looked for the airport and possible alternative landing sites. This delay might have caused the near conflict on the runway. The solution of landing at the nearest airport was complicated by lack of time to communicate with traffic in the area, and the only clear landing spot was the taxiway.

Sliding Visibility PA46 Pilot's Report

The Reporter's Action

■ I could tell that I had slid off the side of the runway but had not hit anything. I cut power and contacted the Tower. I asked for a tug from the FBO. After inspection of my plane in the hangar, it was confirmed that I had not hit anything, nor had I done any damage to my propeller, landing gear, or airplane.

In hindsight, I allowed the fact that planes were departing from another runway to influence my decision to attempt a departure, and I allowed ATC comments about an approaching Learjet to rush me. I should have recognized that [it] was not safe to depart.... This was clearly my error as PIC, but...communicating that a Learjet was approaching helped create an environment where there was a "call-to-action."

Just One More C172 Flight Instructor's Report

The Reporter's Action

■ I agreed. The sun had set and we were beginning to lose some of our light.... As we turned onto final, the lighting system was not turned on.... When we approached short final I heard him keying on the lights.... He had turned them on high intensity.... I began reaching for the hand held microphone to turn down the lights.... When I got the microphone and got them keyed down,...I made a quick glance over to his airspeed indicator to verify that he was at the proper speed, and then I put the microphone back so my hands were free. When I looked back,... I knew we had gotten a little lower than I would have liked, and we then felt the right tire hit the threshold light.... We were able to touch down straight, on the main wheels, and in the center of the runway.... I should have stuck with my instinct that we had done enough takeoffs and landings and that any more could be detrimental to the progress made.

A Limit of Expertise A320 Captain's Report

The Reporter's Action

■ The last 10 feet or so...just felt like the bottom fell out. The airplane landed hard and bounced back into the air.... I heard the auto "PITCH" call and lowered the nose to allow the plane to land firmly on the runway. The First Officer quickly reported a loss of 30 knots over the runway to the Tower. Taxi in was normal. As we taxied in I looked at the G-meter on the systems display, and no indication was observed.... I asked [the Flight Attendants] if they needed the paramedics, and they said, "No."...

[After] the First Officer...returned from the post flight walk around [inspection], he informed me of a scrape on the bottom of the fuselage just before the tail. I went downstairs with the maintenance folks to inspect the damage.... The aft lavatory drain mast had a scrape as well.

ASRS Alerts Issued in January 2018	
Subject of Alert	No. of Alerts
Aircraft or Aircraft Equipment	6
Airport Facility or Procedure	4
ATC Equipment or Procedure	9
Hazard to Flight	6
Other	7
TOTAL	32

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The NASA
Aviation Safety
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<http://asrs.arc.nasa.gov>

January 2018 Report Intake	
Air Carrier/Air Taxi Pilots	5,003
General Aviation Pilots	1,060
Controllers	467
Flight Attendants	442
Military/Other	310
Mechanics	238
Dispatchers	148
TOTAL	7,668