

FAA Alaskan Flyer

AL00FS03

Aviation Information for Alaskans/ A Flight Standards Publication

March-April 2001

Flying the Iditarod Trail

Danny Billman

The great Iditarod Sled Dog Race of 2001 will restart in Wasilla, Sunday March 4th at 10:00 a.m. The days will be longer and this should be, weather permitting, a good opportunity to fire up your airplane and enjoy some world class adventure.

A very thorough inspection of your aircraft may be in order. Heavy snows and winter winds may have been unkind to your airplane. Also, this is a good time to evaluate and test your survival gear and engine preheats equipment.

For flight planning purposes, Michael Tarr, Air Traffic Manager of the Kenai AFSS, reminds us that Flight Service disseminates Iditarod flight information via their pilot briefings and the Telephone Information Briefing Service (TIBS) special announcement channel. This is an excellent system for obtaining weather and information for specific routes or special events. To use TIBS call 1-800-wxb-rief, then at the prompt, select recorded weather #2 and then a TIBS route or special event. Also, McGrath FSS will be open March 1 through March 15 from 8:00 am till 6:00 p.m. This may be subject to change.

When flying along or near the Iditarod Trail, it is recommended you fly to the right of the route, above 500 feet AGL, with landing lights on and monitoring the air-to-air frequency 120.6. Position reporting is critical near landing areas and checkpoints.

Survey landing areas very carefully for drifts, soft snow, deep snow, and overflow. Every year, wheel equipped aircraft end up on their backs when pilots attempt to land wheeled aircraft in areas suitable only for skis. Generally, only the large airports such as Skwentna, McGrath, Nikolai, Anvik, Kaltag, Unalakleet, Koyuk, Shaktoolik, Elim, White Mountain and Nome are maintained for wheel planes. Although well maintained, always inspect carefully for drifting snow and other surface conditions.

The Iditarod Airforce pilots will be very busy moving race officials, vets, dogs and supplies. Please be aware and courteous not to encumber their parking or aircraft movement. Rohn checkpoint, for example, has limited space for aircraft and it would be appreciated if sightseers would avoid landing at that location. The Iditarod pilots donate their time and aircraft to support this unique airlift. They know the trail very well and are always helpful in sharing information on snow conditions and weather.

Proper preflight planning cares to insure you have adequate survival gear, engine preheat equipment and covers, will go a long way to insure your success and enjoyment of the Great Race. Flying the Iditarod Trail is indeed a great adventure. See you on the trail.

REMEMBER, SEE AND BE SEEN!

FAA Alaskan Flyer is published monthly by the Federal Aviation Administration, Flight Standards Division, Alaskan Region.

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“De-Lethalizing” Your Cockpit

Jerry Nunnally

As the title indicates, the following article will address methods of making the cockpit of your aircraft less lethal if you have the misfortune to be involved in a mishap. Alaska’s pilots have been averaging around 125 accidents per year for the last 10 years, mostly minor in nature. In spite of that statistic, there are pilots flying with many thousands of hours that have never damaged an airplane.

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This article is not about the causal factors in accidents or risk assessment as you fly your airplane. This is about surviving and reducing injuries if and when an accident occurs.

In most types of accidents, head injuries are the major cause of fatalities. The head, like arms and legs, is an extremity that tends to flail about as an aircraft comes to an abrupt stop or tumbles. 80% of all fatalities in aircraft accidents are due to head injuries. A former NTSB accident investigator who investigated more than 1000 accidents provided this statistic. Consideration in protecting your head should be a top priority! You may think you have a hard head, because everybody refers to you as hardheaded.

There are four general areas of control to making your cockpit safer:

1) **Avoidance**: - the first and best way to avoid injury is avoid an accident.

2) **Cockpit Integrity**: If you crash, try to keep the cockpit intact. This is easy to say, but may be hard to do. If you can use other parts of the aircraft to absorb most of the energy, you have a good chance of keeping the cockpit intact. An example would be to split two equal size trees with the cockpit in order to shed the wings and thus the fuel that is usually inside. The loss of the wings dissipates a major part of the energy. This will be difficult with all that is occurring, but it has been done. Protecting at least one of your emergency exits is also important.

3) **Occupant Security**: Is your seat belt and shoulder harness installed properly and are you wearing them at **all** times? Events are usually unexpected and happen fast. The military teaches something called a “Strike Envelop” that demonstrates how far the head flails without a shoulder harness—about 40 inches. Is there any hard or sharp object in your aircraft within 40 inches of your head? The average head weighs about 15 pounds and with the 10g forces in a severe crash, that weight goes up to about 150 pounds. The military uses the 5 point restraint system, which is the best restraint system. This system reduces the distance a head moves to about 10 inches. This type of system may hinder normal movement in the cockpit, such as reaching for the flap handle or other essential controls. The inertial reel is definitely better than having no shoulder restraint at all. It is impossible to keep your head from moving without a head restraint. Have you considered a helmet? Probably not. But they are becoming more common than you think. Most important is the need for the restraint to be installed properly. A local pilot drowned due to problems with the restraint system in his airplane. The pilot simply couldn’t reach the release because it was covered by the door’s arm-rest.

4) **Sterile Environment**: Hard and sharp devices have already been mentioned. The improperly installed portable GPS may now be a projectile or an object that your head might hit. A ten-pound rifle in your cargo area now becomes one hundred pounds of metal flying forward. A five-pound book on your back seat is now a fifty-pound missile. **All cargo must be secured**. There have been several fatalities caused by unrestrained cargo or back seat passengers coming forward on top of the pilot. A survivor of an accident north of Anchorage described how he and the pilot were both pinned under shallow water due to the baggage shifting forward and on top of them. The pilot did not survive.

How about a Nomex flight suit? They provide protection against fire when worn appropriately, something you will be glad you have on if a post-crash fire occurs.

Think about the emergency procedures for your aircraft and read the emergency checklist every few days. The time to practice emergencies, including egress of your aircraft, is at the tie-downs. Each time you enter the aircraft to fly, just look around and see what can be hit or hit you. Practice the release of safety belts with doors closed and open.

Brief your passengers before every flight as to what their role is “in the unlikely event” an emergency occurs. I do, and the briefing is always appreciated.

In summary, the four elements of cockpit De-lethalization are:

- 1: Avoidance - don't have an accident.
- 2: Cockpit Integrity - if you crash, keep the cockpit intact.
- 3: Occupant Security - strap yourself and all cargo down.
- 4: Sterile Environment - inspect, move, remove, pad it. Remember to protect your head and all extremities. You will probably need them all later.

Simply keeping a personal-minimums checklist handy or even the simple acronym “**S.A.F.E**” will help remind you of steps you should take in planning a successful flight. Before flying, check your Self, inspect your Aircraft, have a Flight plan on file and check the Environment.

BE SAFE!

Congratulations! Anchorage FSDO CFI of the Year

Charlotte Luckett of Mustang Aviation in Palmer has been chosen as the Anchorage Flight Standards District Office CFI of the year. Charlotte received an overwhelming support from her aviation community citing her enthusiasm and professionalism as an instructor and for involvement as an Aviation Safety Counselor. Charlotte's dedication is admired by all. Her name now is being considered for the Regional Award.

Keep up the good work



Heads Up! Avalanche Control 101 Or How Not to be Downed by a Howitzer.

The next issue of the Alaska Supplement will include charts depicting avalanche control areas, where Alaska DOT brings down cornices and initiates avalanches to protect persons and property. There are five main areas to be aware of, as the method used, a 105/155 Howitzer, could be potentially hazardous to your flight as was almost experienced by an unsuspecting aviator last year. Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFR) will be in effect during these periods. The five areas are:

Area:	Altitude:
Atigun Pass	Surface to 5,700 AGL
Thompson Pass	Surface to 7,300 AGL
Gastineau Channel	Surface to 5,400 AGL
Turnagain 1-2-3	Surface to 5,400 AGL
Turnagain 4-5-6	Surface to 5,400 AGL

The times of operation will be determined by DOT. For Information on this activity, contact your local FSS or ARTCC. This activity will be available in the form of NOTAMS.



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AC Form 1360-165 (3/96)

**UPCOMING
SAFETY SEMINARS 2001**

Fairbanks FSDO District

NTSB (Tentative) March 15
IA Renewal March 16

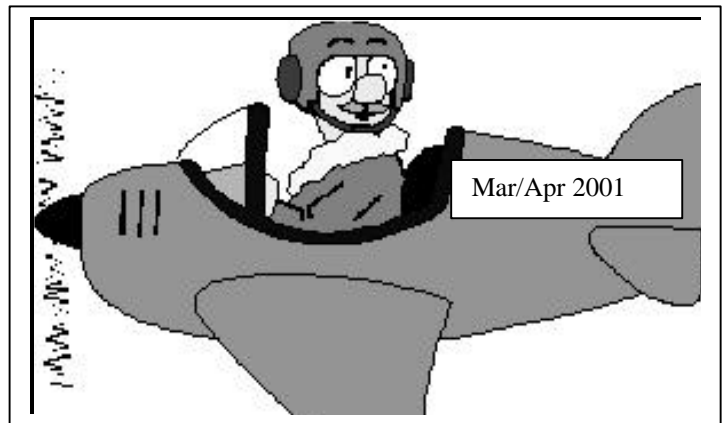
Anchorage FSDO District

Spring Seminar March 10
Dillingham April 3
King Salmon April 4
Seaplane Seminar April 21

Juneau FSDO District

Please contact the Juneau FSDO
for the monthly meeting schedule.

Please check with your local FSDO office
through the "800" toll free number for
specific times and locations. The numbers
are listed on page 1.



IN THIS ISSUE

Flying the Iditarod	Pg 1-2
De-Lethalizing the Cockpit	Pg 2-3
Avalanche Control 101	Pg 3
Congratulations- ANC CFI of the Year	Pg 3