

CALLBACK

From NASA's Aviation Safety Reporting System



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What Would You Have Done?



In “interactive” issues of *CALLBACK*, readers are given the opportunity to consider an appropriate course of action for a given situation. The front page of this issue describes various situations encountered by ASRS reporters (the beginning of the story). On the back page, you will find the actions actually taken by the reporters to resolve these incidents (the rest of the story). Keep in mind that the actions described by reporters may not represent the safest responses to situations. Our intent is to stimulate thought and discussion about the types of incidents reported.

Situation #1: “There Was No Right Main Gear in Sight” (GA Pilot)

■ This was a photo flight in a rental aircraft departing with fuel to the tabs...There was a loud ‘clunk’ noise as I was communicating with Tower. Instruments indicated everything was normal (this included the gear-up light), and we were unable to visually identify anything wrong externally. Noise came from beneath us, but gear wasn’t extended, and we had full fuel, so we proceeded as intended. Upon returning, I extended the gear at 110 knots approximately 1500 feet over highway...There was no green light, and there was no right main gear in sight. I’m a CFI, so I sit on the right because this is where I’m most comfortable. Also, for photo flights in this aircraft, the left window can be opened fully for a camera. I notified Tower, did a low approach for their verification of the situation, and then began circling...Troubleshooting via the POH [Pilot’s Operating Handbook] emergency procedures failed to extend the right main twice. The photographer is a low-time pilot, so we arranged the tasks in the cockpit... Retracting and extending the gear showed that the right main would extend most of the way, but would be pushed aft in the wind, almost to full retraction (as confirmed in reflection of open window). Pulling G’s failed...We had been in the air for hours, so fuel was running very low....

What would you have done?

Situation #2: “The Trainee Got Caught Up in the Heat of the Moment” (Air Traffic Controller)

■ At ZZZ airport, an aircraft landing Runway 4R was instructed to go around due to traffic on the runway, at the same time a Runway 4L departure was just breaking ground downfield. Control instructions were given to separate these 2 aircraft by a trainee who was in the process of briefing a relieving controller. The instructor (me) gave the trainee instructions to avoid conflict with airport ABC ILS Runway 6 arrivals, however the trainee

got caught up in the heat of the moment and issued his own instructions, which put the Runway 4L departure in direct conflict with the ABC ILS Runway 6 arrival....

What would you have done?

Situation #3: “Got That Bad Feeling” (MD80 Captain)

■ Eleven nautical miles from Runway 22R intercepted ILS Runway 22R, Approach then advised FOD [Foreign Object Debris] on Runway 22R, expect to go to Runway 27R. Inflight visibility about 7 miles in haze, early morning sun. Approach gave initial heading to move to Runway 27R localizer. I told First Officer I had runway in sight, all navigation instrumentation appeared to be appropriate. A few moments later, I lost what I believed to be Runway 27R, had the approach plates out for both runways and had Runway 27R selected, but was on a sharp intercept angle and after losing sight of what I believed to be the Runway 27R, got that bad feeling that too much was going on to be comfortable. Unknown to us, the #2 VHF nav receiver (the First Officer’s) had failed....

What would you have done?

Situation #4: “My Engine Called it Quits” (GA Pilot)

■ We were on our way home, sailing along in the Bonanza at 9,000 feet enjoying a clear sunny day and a nice 20-knot tailwind...There was a continuous overcast layer far below us but this was not a concern, until I thought I noticed some very subtle variation in the RPM so readjusted it from 2400 back to 2300 RPM and tightened the locking ring, but didn’t know why it had changed. I then did a routine instrument scan and was shocked to see the oil pressure gauge pegged at zero! I warned my wife (also a pilot) to get ready for the engine to stop soon and advised Center of our emergency situation. My GPS showed a small airport with a 4,000 foot runway about 10 miles ahead. ATC confirmed this and cleared me direct to ZZZ (as though I had many options) and began to advise of my relative position. About that time, my engine called it quits...We glided easily to above ZZZ but at 2,000-3,000 feet we were on top of the solid overcast layer without any visual ground contact... As I spiraled down over the field, ATC lost radar and radio contact with me so of course could not give me any further situational help or keep up with what was happening....

What would you have done?

ASRS Alerts Issued in May 2008	
Subject of Alert	No. of Alerts
Aircraft or aircraft equipment	17
Airport facility or procedure	10
ATC procedure or equipment	3
Company policy	1
Total	31

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May 2008 Report Intake	
Air Carrier/Air Taxi Pilots	2762
General Aviation Pilots	883
Controllers	120
Cabin/Mechanics/Military/Other	409
TOTAL	4174

Situation #5: “I Smelled Something Electrical” (Flight Attendant)

■ After about 3 to 5 minutes from takeoff, I smelled something electrical...I called the cockpit and explained the smell, and told the Captain I would call him back in seconds if it got worse. At that time, I looked back in the cabin and passengers were complaining of a bad odor...I also noticed a smoke or haze slowly filling up, in no particular area. I immediately called back to the cockpit and...told him I was going to locate the haze. When I was at my interphone I noticed that the floor by my jumpseat was getting very warm and at the same time the smoke alarm in the lavatories started ringing....

What would you have done?

The Rest of the Story - Our Reporter's Actions

Situation #1: “There Was No Right Main Gear in Sight” (GA Pilot)

■ A pilot on the ground relayed a story to us...about a successful extension using the towbar...I tried twice to extend the right main by hooking the bar around the leg in slow flight, but only moved it forward approximately 6-8 inches... We agreed we'd try once more to extend the gear, and then we had to land.

The photographer got on the floor in the back seat, I moved to the left front seat, pushed the right seat full forward, and the photographer wrapped his legs around the bars of the back seat before extending part of his torso out the door to use a combo of the towbar and his hands. The green light suddenly went on, and the gear warning horn stopped. I returned to the right seat, and elected to land at ZZZ for the long and wide runway. The towbar and hands had been able to lock the gear in place. We landed cautiously at ZZZ without any problems. The photographer did this because he's hung out of helicopters for photos many times. All attempts (except G's) were performed at MCA [Minimum Controllable Airspeed] of 40-45 knots.

Situation #2: “The Trainee Got Caught Up in the Heat of the Moment” (Air Traffic Controller)

■ I was able to call the [direct] line...and advise Approach Control as to the pending situation at which time they turned the ABC arrival away from the ZZZ departure...The trainee who was providing a position relief briefing at the time of this incident was unable to respond to his trainer's instructions to resolve this conflict. While I (trainer) was

aware of the situation and giving instructions to the trainee, I did not have override capability as the relieving controller (who was unaware of the pending situation, due to the fact he had just plugged in), was plugged into the jack that would have given me the chance to issue the proper control instructions.

Situation #3: “Got That Bad Feeling” (MD80 Captain)

■ I was getting conflicting information and nothing made any sense which made me try to scramble to mentally resolve what was going on. We had switched to the Tower Controller. He was doing a good job of giving me several headings to try to steer to final to salvage this, but I finally did the right thing and told the First Officer to advise the Tower we were going missed approach.

I showed very bad judgement in calling the airport in sight so early in marginal visibility. Years ago, the flight manual stated that a visual approach should not be accepted unless it is judged as 'safe as [an] instrument approach.' That is still good advice. I give myself a 'D' for the bad judgement that put me in that situation of my own creation. I give myself an 'A' for declaring a missed approach early. We never got below 3,000 feet MSL and were 5 nm from airport when I blew the approach off and did the right thing. Good lesson learned.

Situation #4: “My Engine Called it Quits” (GA Pilot)

■ The GPS was able to tell me exactly where the airport was below the clouds and allowed me to stay over it. We broke out of the clouds at just 600-700 feet directly over the middle of the field and were able to execute a successful engine-out landing. Due to the low ceiling, my visual maneuvering options were very limited when I broke out, so if I'd been 1 mile or 2 miles off, the outcome would have been much different as the surroundings were inhospitably hilly and wooded terrain. The GPS paid for itself many times over!

Situation #5: “I Smelled Something Electrical” (Flight Attendant)

■ I immediately went to grab the halon, and felt the walls and ceilings in both lavatories. They felt normal. Then only the right lavatory alarm continued to chime. The left lavatory chimes stopped. I then called up to the front and asked the flight attendants to bring back more halons. I started to feel the ceilings in the aisles. By this time, the smoke/haze had dissipated. The Captain informed the passengers we would be landing in 10 minutes. I then went up to the window exits to brief the passengers if and when they needed to open the window. We landed without incident...We were finally towed to the gate...