

SAFETY PILOT CHECKLIST

Brief the Trip

Every multi-pilot trip should start with a briefing. (It is also very wise to brief yourself on a solo trip, too, as if you were two people.) Briefing the trip is a great start toward coordinating your efforts as a crew.

- Brief a safety pilot trip as if you were filing IFR. The PF (pilot flying) must explain to the PNF (pilot not flying) the flow of his/her trip segment. Particularly, “finger fly” the approaches on the ground. The acid test: **If you can explain it, you can do it. If you can't, go over it until you can.**
 - A specific pre-approach briefing in the air is highly recommended, and very professional.
- Who will do what?
 - Who will be pilot-in-command, and when? (Say, whoever's in the left seat. Or whoever's flying the approach.)
 - Division of Tasks: For example, will the PNF handle the communications while the PF does everything else?
 - If there is an abnormal situation or an emergency.
- **Set your objectives.** For instance, if your objective is IFR currency, then you will be interested in doing course tracking, holds, and approaches. If it is toward a rating, then it might be something from the PTS. Whatever it is, set your objectives first. If sharing the flight, your safety pilot will have her/his objectives, too.
- **Plan a course of action** to meet your objectives:
 - What approaches, holds and maneuvers will we do?
 - How will we get there?
 - Who will do what approach, hold, maneuver or segment?
- **Work out a flow** of approaches so as to maximize approach time and minimize travel time. This has the added benefit of putting a little pressure on you. Under pressure, weak skills become obvious and form the basis for further practice.
- **Account for external influences** that may affect your plan. Examples:
 - **Winds.** If you plan to do an ILS 9, do the winds favor that runway? At a non-tower airport you can circle, but tower airports are reluctant to approve opposite-direction approaches. What is your Plan B if you can't do a desired approach?
 - **NOTAMs**, especially FDC NOTAMs that might affect your approach plans. An OTS (out of service) VOR or ILS component may dictate a new plan.
 - **Aircraft condition and any squawks.** Does that ADF receiver really work? How's the Mode C feeling today? Is the GPS database current?

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- **Expectations as to traffic.** Agree in advance that if your safety pilot says “My airplane”, s/he has seen traffic and you need to let go of the controls instantly. You respond with “Your airplane” and the SP says “My airplane” to confirm. A positive exchange of controls is essential.
- **Clear absolutely every turn** before you make it. If your safety pilot does not clear you, ask them to do so. The one time you don’t clear is the time you’ll get clipped.
- **Ask for flight following** of course, but in the end, your safety pilot is responsible for traffic avoidance.
- Anything else that will help you both communicate and mesh as a team.