



Backcountry Aircraft Preflight Checklist

Your time in the Idaho backcountry can be some of the most enjoyable and memorable flying that you do. However, operations will be conducted at unimproved airstrips far from any maintenance facilities. Preparing your aircraft is just as important as your own pilot currency and preparation, and will help to maximize your backcountry flying experience.

As part of our ground school curriculum, our staff will conduct a back country aircraft preflight with you prior to your first flight to assure your aircraft will be in the best condition to operate in the back country and to address any items unique to your airplane. In addition, they will assist you in recognizing specific areas or components that you will need to pay more attention to than you would in "normal" operations.

Following is a list of items that you will need to inspect and assure are in good working order prior to your arrival in McCall and operations in the back country:

Landing Gear:

- Gear boxes -- determine if main gear boxes are in good condition (your mechanic will be able to tell you or help you with this)
- Nose gear -- check oleo struts for proper inflation and check scissors links for cracks and loose hinge joints. Check driver arms for proper operation.
- Snubbers -- check for inflation and looseness at attach points
- Tailwheel -- insure integrity of springs and leaves and cable attach points, proper cleanliness and lubrication, and steering/castoring ability if applicable
- Retractable Gear -- verify gear is working properly and any squat switches or mechanisms are operable. Having clean mechanisms will help your inspection.

Wheels and brakes:

- Wheel rims -- Remove all wheel fairings for backcountry flying. Check rims for indications of cracking (generally cracks occur at the through - bolt holes)
- Tires -- inspect for cuts and UV deterioration and overall condition
- Brakes -- check lines, bushings, and condition of flex hoses and connections for cracking or leaking. Check master cylinder for fluid level and leaks. Insure brake pads and discs are in good condition and are of acceptable thickness. Check for "dragging" of brakes and insure that any parking brake release mechanism is working properly.

Powerplant:

- Engine -- inspect general condition and repair any fluid leaks
- Baffling -- check for cracking or blockage of cooling airflow
- Cowl -- check general condition and make sure any cracks are stop drilled or repaired
- Cowl flaps -- verify proper operation and inspect hinges and rods for looseness or binding
- Ignition -- inspect condition of harness and spark plugs and insure magneto and plug connections are tight
- Hoses & Clamps -- check that hoses are in good condition, are seated properly, and clamps are tight
- Filters -- inspect and assure air filters are clean and unobstructed
- Engine Controls -- inspect and insure throttle, mixture, prop, and carb heat controls are working properly and not sticking or binding
- Cabin heater -- if muffler bypass type -- inspect for leaks
- Propeller -- inspect and insure prop has no nicks, and check all seals and hubs for leaks and proper operation. Make sure spinners are secure

Fuselage and interior:

- Skin -- visually check the underside of the fuselage, wing, and tail surfaces for damage
- Flaps -- verify proper operation and check tracks, hinges, and rollers for cracking
- Windscreen -- repair cracks and polish and bad windshield crazing
- Landing light -- confirm lights are working
- Seats -- make sure backs are secure and check seat rails for integrity
- Seat stops -- insure seat stops for both left and right seats operate smoothly and properly
- Seatbelts & Harnesses -- shoulder harness type restraints are to be installed for right front seat or rear seat of tandem aircraft. Inspect for proper and smooth operation and security, make sure buckles latch properly and adjustment points work, inspect and repair torn or frayed belts.
- Cargo area -- if you have cargo insure that it is secured properly by means of some type of net or tie-downs. Inspect cargo net attach points
- ELT -- verify the ELT is working properly and has good batteries