Salt Lake City Department of Airports

# GENERAL AVIATION NEWS

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## GA SNOW REMOVAL

We have been briefed by the National Weather Service that we can anticipate a "warmer than normal winter with at least average snowfall" in the Salt Lake Valley this winter. "Average" snowfall at SLC is about 63 inches. Last year at U42 we plowed nearly 68 inches.

To facilitate best access for general aviation operations, be aware that crews at SLC will plow eastside taxiways and taxi-lanes after commercial runways, taxiways, and ramps are cleared.

FBOs are required to clear their own ramps to the edge of their lease lines prior to airport crews plowing taxiways.

Taxiway A and the runway at U42 will normally be cleared and deiced by 0900 after a snow event and crews will work throughout the day to keep taxi-lanes and common ramps usable.

Thankfully, TVY usually receives much less snow (last winter we plowed less than 10 inches all winter) and will not be cleared until SLC crews are complete with snow removal operations at SLCIA.

SLCDA crews will normally try to clear snow from in front of GA hangars to within four feet of hangar entrances. Tenants are responsible to clear remaining snow to ingress and egress hangars.

## FLIGHT PLAN HELPFUL TOOLS

www.aopa.org/aifp -- AOPA's Flight Planner uses a high-resolution map with weather overlays to help you visualize your route.
www.fltplan.com – Check the most recent ATC-assigned routes and file a flight plan.
www.duats.com – Both DUATS services automatically select waypoints within 200 miles of the preceding center's boundary using the various "direct" options. Preferred routes are automatically checked and assigned in the airway routing section.
www.flightaware.com – Find the most efficient route in an easy-to-read matrix with winds and route taken into account.
www.navmonster.com – Quick and easy planning for direct routes, as well as weather in a user-friendly format.

## A PERFECT ICE FLIGHT

By Thomas A. Horne in AOPA Pilot magazine

With a title like this, you're certainly wondering if anything to do with flying around ice can be called "perfect." And strictly speaking, you'd be right. A safety-conscious pilot would never knowingly fly into icing conditions, and we all know why… Even small ice accretions can cause significantly decreased lift, compromised handling characteristics, and increased stall speeds, as well as ruining one's ability to climb. But you can't ground yourself every time you learn of an icing AIRMET, or you'd never fly on any cloudy winter day. There are ways of safely dealing with ice, however, and in-flight strategies that will allow you to make the most of your winter flights. All of them hinge on having the right set of weather conditions, the right pilot qualifications and experience level, the right attitude toward the preflight briefing, and the right in-flight decision-making sense. As you examine all these variables, be particular about how you plan to fly around any icing situations. If you can do that – voila -- you have your "perfect" ice flight. We're basically talking about staying in visual meteorological conditions… even if you're planning a flight under instrument flight rules.

During the preflight briefing you need to be able to identify the weather setups that are definitely not conducive to ice-free cross-country flying, and those that are. Then you need to factor in the geographic elements of the flight, as well as your aircraft's capabilities.

To keep your distance from icing clouds, you want to be able to observe high cloud bases and low clouds, or you want to have high cloud bases and low cloud tops. The combination of low clouds, a freezing level at the surface, and high terrain is a definite no-go. You don't want to attempt a low-level flight weaving around obstacles while experiencing an icy overcast that prevents you from climbing. As for tops, you want them, well… top-able. And here's where your aircraft comes into the picture. Are you flying an airplane with 100 or 300 horsepower? Normally aspirated or turbocharged? (For the purpose of this article, we're assuming your airplane is not certified for flight into known icing.) More power means faster climbs to altitude, so the more power the better.

As you scan METARs, TAFs, AIRMETs, SIGMETs, PIREPs, and the area forecast, bear in mind that a perfect flight demands that any cloud layers be either few or scattered in coverage. Few, as you recall from ground school, means that less than one-eighth to one-fourth of the sky is covered; scattered means coverage of three-eighths to one-half of the sky.

Another requisite is a solid forecast for good VFR weather at your departure airport… no less than a 3,000-foot scattered lower layer with visibilities no less than five statute miles. This is your out. You don't want to fly halfway through your trip, encounter rising tops or other deteriorating weather, and not have a nearly cloud-free airport waiting for you after you do a 180-degree turn.

Lots of blue sky is a must. Any METARs or TAFs mentioning broken (five-eighths to seven-eighths coverage) skies anywhere along the route of flight mean a no-go decision. There may not be adequate margins for a cloud-free climb or descent through these kinds of layers. Of course, if you're just planning a local flight, you can ease up a bit on the sky-cover restriction, as long as you have good observed basic VMC weather.

It's also a good idea to check the Aviation Digital Data Service (ADDS) for its icing information (http://adds.aviationweather.noaa.gov/icing). By clicking on the "bases" or "tops" icons you can quickly see where trouble begins and ends along your proposed route of flight. Freezing-level graphics and icing AIRMETs also appear on the same Web page. Just remember to double-check the valid times of any imagery.

Thoroughly consider the terrain you'll be flying over. Mountain ranges and nearby bodies of water generate large areas of deep icing layers, and must be carefully evaluated before attempting to fly over them, especially if any fronts or lows are close by. Lifting is always prevalent over mountainous areas, so any clouds with icing potential are apt to have tops that can rise to your cruising altitude.

With cloud bases at or near the mountaintops and minimum altitudes thousands of feet higher, you lose the option of descending to cloud (or ice) free conditions because rocks await you. There are fewer suitable airports that could serve as safe havens, too.

Finally, there's the human factor. If you're a VFR-only pilot, have you flown cross-countries in VFR on-top conditions? Do you feel comfortable about it? If push comes to the proverbial shove, could you call air traffic control for help and perform an instrument letdown through rising clouds to clearer conditions below? If you answered yes to these questions, then you're a better candidate for this kind of ice-avoidance flying. If not, get some experience with someone who has more time flying in and/or among the clouds.

## *HELPFUL POINTS OF CONTACT*

**For GA operational, facilities maintenance, aviation newsletter, airfield, and SLC Title 16 questions call:** Steve Jackson, SLCDA General Aviation Manager, 801-647-5532 or e-mail at steve.jackson@slcgov.com.

**For hangar lease and repair questions call:** Mike Rawson, Properties Management Specialist, at 801-575-2894 or e-mail at mike.rawson@slcgov.com.

**For aviation security questions call:** Connie Proctor at 801-575-2401.

**For gate access problems call:** Airport Control Center at 801-575-2401.

**For emergencies call: at SLCIA,** 801-575-2405
**at TVY or U42,** 911 then 801-575-2405

Instrument-rated (and current) pilots have more options if the weather falls apart and a descent on instruments (or an instrument approach) is the only way out of an inadvertent icing encounter. Just remember that the airplane doesn't know whether you're instrument-rated or not, and even the best of pilots, and the most capable of airplanes, have been felled by dwelling too long in icing conditions.

That's why all pilots of light piston singles and twins should always try to fly in "perfect" winter weather. With high cloud bases and low tops, plenty of space between clouds, no angry fronts, and lots of altitude, you can nearly always safely transit areas singled out in icing AIRMETs.

So "fly smart" and have a safe winter flying season.

## ELECTRONIC GA NEWS

If you would like to receive the Salt Lake City Department of Airports' monthly general aviation newsletter by e-mail, send a request including your e-mail address to: steve.jackson@slcgov.com .

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Leading Edge Aviation Logan** (LGU) - Leading Edge Aviation has a free breakfast in their hangar on the 2nd Saturday of each month from 8:00 am to 10:00 am. For more information about Leading Edge events, visit www.leaviation.com .

**October Local FAA Seminars** The FAASTeam is sponsoring the following CFI workshops during December. The subjects this quarter are winter weather hazards and National Weather Service seminars. Trends in General Aviation and Risk Management for Flight Instructors will also be taught. Non CFIs are also invited to attend. Utah Highway Patrol pilots Steve Rugg & Terry Mercer will discuss flying helicopters for the UHP at the December 3rd meeting. More information is available at faasafety.gov or contact Dennis Seals FAA Safety Program Manager at 801-257-5056

12/3 6:PM Kibbie Building - Helicopter Emphasis
12/15 6:PM Cedar City Airport Cedar City
12/16 6:PM Dixie College Hangar St. George Airport St. George, Utah

Seminar and related information may be found at www.faasafety.gov under "events".

**HAPPY HOLLIDAYS!**