

DEC 2024



CARE OF PASSENGERS

IN GENERAL AVIATION AIRCRAFT



YOUR SAFETY SENSE LEAFLET FOR: **CARE OF PASSENGERS**

Taking up friends and relatives is one of the most rewarding elements of flying, but there are some considerations for the health and safety of passengers, and to ensure any associated risks are managed.

Under the [Air Navigation Order](#) and the [Air Operations Regulation](#), the pilot in command of any aircraft has responsibility for the safety of those onboard.

While the legal responsibility starts after boarding with the intention of flight, you should also ensure that passenger safety is considered prior to and after the flight, for example when airside at the airfield.

Some passengers may be familiar with light aircraft operations, however you should always give reminders where appropriate, and the legal requirement for a passenger safety briefing always applies.

PRIOR TO THE FLIGHT

Weather conditions



Explain to passengers that flying in light aircraft is subject to weather conditions and manage their expectations accordingly.

If you need to plan a particular date for the flight in advance, monitor the weather forecast a few days beforehand and give your would-be passengers plenty of notice if it is looking unfavourable. This will mitigate any perceived pressure to take them flying on the day if conditions are not suitable.

Consider how the weather on the day will influence passenger comfort and enjoyment.

For example, if planning a scenic VFR flight, you should choose a day with a good weather forecast and reschedule if the weather is poor, even if it may be technically safe to fly.

Be aware that sometimes fine and warm days can actually be turbulent and/or hazy, so take that into account when thinking about passenger comfort.

Do not put yourself in a position in which you could be pressured into flying when the weather conditions are not safe.

If planning a trip further afield, allow a buffer of free time to account for poor weather, or have a clear alternative such as the train or commercial flight, should you or a passenger have a commitment that cannot be missed.

PRIOR TO THE FLIGHT

Weight & Balance



Consider the weight & balance and performance limitations for the intended flight. For example, how many passengers are you able to carry in the intended aircraft and will you be able to safely take-off and land in the available runway length? Conduct an approximate calculation to establish what is realistic. If you will need to limit fuel load, ensure this is arranged prior to the flight.



Complete a weight and balance calculation – remember it is a legal requirement that the aircraft remains within limits throughout the flight. People can be reluctant to reveal their weight so if you need to complete a weight and balance calculation, make it clear why it is important to know passenger weights. Account for luggage and other items that will be onboard.



If you anticipate passengers bringing any luggage, advise of the limitations on this. Depending on the space in the cockpit, advise against any items such as bulky bags – for example in a vintage aircraft with exposed control cables it is important there are no loose items that could obstruct the controls.

Clothing



Clothing and footwear should be warm and comfortable.

During winter light aircraft can be cold but avoid bulky coats that will make movement in the aircraft awkward. If crossing water and/or wearing lifejackets in the aircraft, consider how this will influence clothing choice.

Dangerous Goods



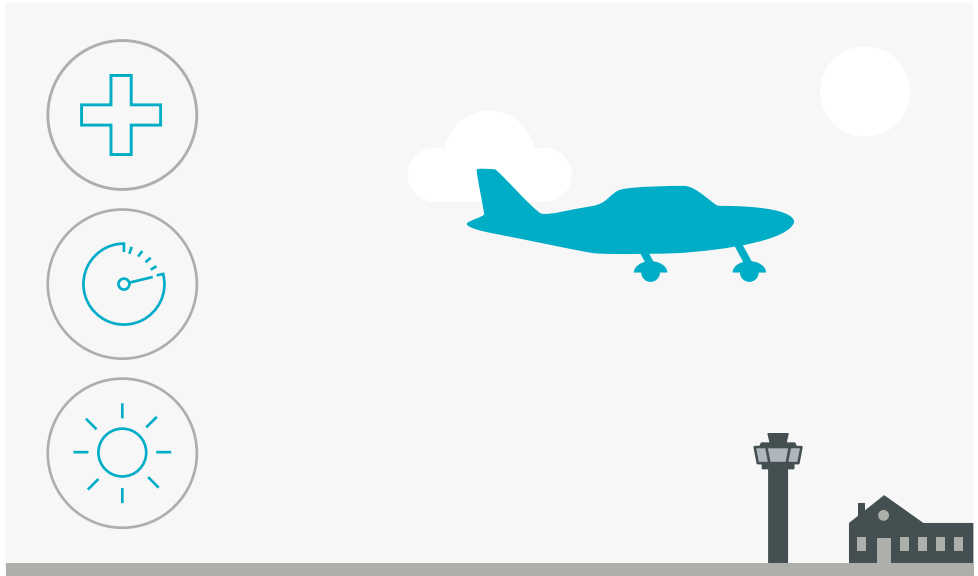
Consider if passengers may wish to bring items considered dangerous goods. This could include flammable liquids or items such as camping gas.

Guidance and prohibitions as per airline passenger requirements would generally be suitable for light aircraft as well. Although there are alleviations for light aircraft, the CAA recommends nothing be carried that would not be permitted in the cabin of an airline flight, unless related to flight safety or required for the airworthiness of the aircraft. Never allow dangerous goods to be stored in an area of the aircraft not accessible during flight.

More information can be found on the [CAA website](#). [NCO.GEN.140](#) of the Air Operations Regulation is the applicable regulation for carrying dangerous goods in light aircraft.

PRIOR TO THE FLIGHT

What to expect?



If the intended passenger(s) are unfamiliar with light aircraft, it is a good idea to **start with a relatively short flight in good weather**.

It may be helpful to discuss the differences from flying in a large commercial aircraft in terms of noises or turbulence that might seem different – tailor this to the previous experience of the passengers.

Most people who seem willing to get into a light aircraft will probably enjoy the experience. **Fear of flying** however is common and occasionally a nervous reaction may take place.

Remember that even modest **bank angles** or small increases in **'G' force can be unsettling, so explain these factors** and take account of them when flying.

An amount of pilot judgement is necessary – as you get more experienced with taking different people up you will become better at assessing how they are likely to react. Passengers may also feel unwell or find the unique environment of noises and other sensations disconcerting.

Ensure passengers are not unwell prior to the flight, such as suffering from a cold – even minor congestion can become painful with pressure changes.

Explain that it is possible they will feel nauseous during the flight – they should let you know and if appropriate get back on the ground. Have sick bags available.

Ensure passengers are not under the influence of alcohol or other substances. It is an offence for someone to be drunk on an aircraft.

AT THE AIRFIELD



Give yourself plenty of time at the airfield. Dealing with passengers will take additional time prior to the flight, so avoid putting yourself under pressure if you only have use of the aircraft for a short period, or have to make a particular departure time.

Consider **leaving your passengers in a safe and comfortable place**, such as the aerodrome club house, while performing the preflight inspection or refuelling. This will allow you to concentrate on making sure the aircraft is ready for the flight. Point out bathroom facilities at the aerodrome and recommend passengers make use of them.

Once ready to go:



Escort passengers to and from the aircraft and board / disembark with the engine shut down.



Explain the dangers of an aerodrome, especially propeller safety.



Explain how to approach and board the aircraft safely, taking care to be well clear of propellers and only stand on steps/areas of the aircraft designed as such.

'Running Changes', the practice of people boarding or disembarking with the engine running, are sometimes conducted in the flight training environment. However, they are not appropriate with passengers – even experienced pilots have been known to walk or slip into the propeller disk while getting in and out of aircraft, normally with fatal results.

ONBOARD



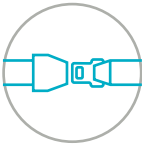
Explain the controls and the importance of keeping hands, feet and other objects such as cameras clear of them.



Ensure **bags are stowed** safely.



Ask that phones be put on **'airplane mode'** – explain that even if phones are unlikely to be a safety issue in a light aircraft, they can cause nuisance audio interference in headsets.



Demonstrate and assist with the **use of seatbelts**.



Explain how the **headsets, intercom and radio** in the aircraft work and how to avoid interrupting radio calls.



Explain the **critical periods of the flight** during which not to distract you or speak, unless it is an emergency. Many passengers will naturally sense when not to disturb the pilot, but not always.



Explain about **looking out for other aircraft** and how this assists the flight. This will also make passengers feel more involved.

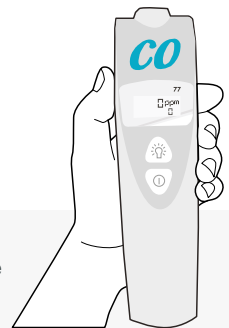


Brief on **emergency procedures and equipment**.

Safety Directive SD-2024/001

From January 2025, operators of piston engine aircraft are required to have a functioning active carbon monoxide detector on board when operating with passengers who do not hold a recognised pilot qualification.

The requirement to have an active CO detector does not apply to some types of aircraft/operation – see [SD-2024/001](#) and [SSL 34: Carbon Monoxide Safety](#) for further details.

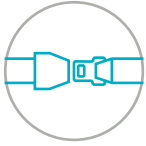


ONBOARD

Emergency briefing

It is a legal requirement under the [Air Navigation Order](#) (non-Part-21 aircraft) and [Air Operations Regulation](#) (Part-21 aircraft) that the pilot in command brief passengers on the safety and emergency procedures relevant to the flight.

This should include:



Operation of the seatbelts



Location and operation of doors/canopies and emergency exits



Operation of safety equipment such as lifejackets, rafts, personal locator beacons



Instructions on what to do in an emergency, such as the brace position and evacuating

Consider discussing emergency scenarios such as forced landing or ditching - emphasize that most are survivable and focus on important points such as how to open doors and evacuate the aircraft.

Brace position



For passengers seated with a shoulder restraint, the straps should be adjusted to be tight but not uncomfortable. If fitted with an inertia reel, the mechanism should remove any slack in the belt. To prepare for an impact, the head should be tilted forwards, with the chin placed against the body. If facing rearwards with a headrest or bulkhead behind you, rest your head back against it. Arms and hands can be secured by placing the palms underneath the legs or crossing arms in front of the body. Feet should be flat on the floor. Do not tense the body for impact since a rigid body is more likely to be injured. Remove headsets before impact.

If only a lap belt is available, an airline style brace position should be adopted, with head down towards the knees and hands placed one over the other (fingers not interlocked) on top of the head.

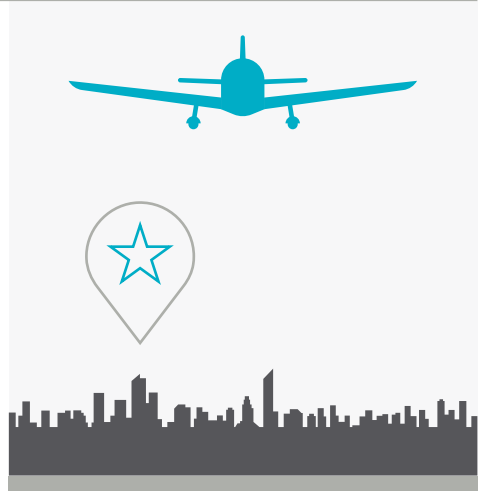
ONBOARD

In flight

Once airborne, you can make things more interesting by explaining the conduct of the flight – for example what you are doing to pilot the aircraft at different stages, or point out features of interest on the ground. Do not become distracted though, and if necessary, politely but firmly tell passengers that you need to focus on flying the aircraft.

Remind passengers about keeping a look out for other aircraft and periodically check passenger comfort, such as the cabin temperature and that they are feeling well.

Assuming the right preparation and briefing has been done, flying with passengers will prove enjoyable and satisfying.



ONBOARD

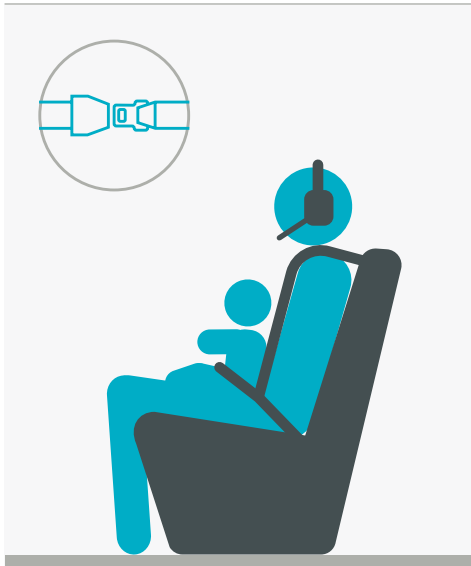
Children

Many children will enjoy flying, but additional consideration should be given to ensure their safety and that of the flight.

Infants under the age of two must be secured by a seat belt loop on an adult's lap, or in a child restraint device. Such devices should be suitable for aviation use (not all infant car seats are) and ensure in advance of the flight that the intended device will work in your aircraft.

Above the age of two, children may be able to use the normal seat belts, but again this will depend on the aircraft.

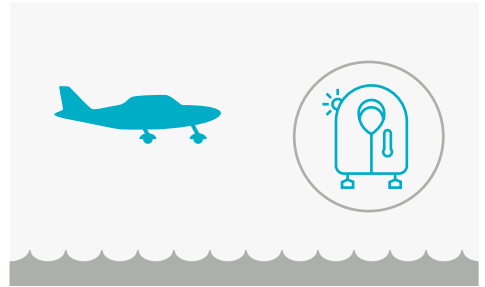
With infants and young children there should be another adult onboard to ensure their safety, and that they do not become a distraction to the pilot.



ONBOARD

Over water

Life jackets must be carried for all occupants when crossing a significant body of water. In single engine piston aircraft, they should be worn during the flight. Even in a twin-engine aircraft, consideration should be given as to whether it is practical to don lifejackets in the confines of the aircraft, particularly if passengers may not be familiar with their use. For more information on flight over water, see **CAA Safety Sense Leaflet no.21**.



REMINDER CHECKLIST FOR FLYING WITH PASSENGERS



Weather

- Forecast suitable



Practicalities

- Explain practicalities such as clothing and luggage limitations



Weight & Balance and Performance

- Ensure intended flight is within limits



What to expect

- Explain the nature of light aircraft flying and what to expect



Safety briefing

- Brief on safety and emergency procedures
- Cover safety to and from the aircraft



Enjoying the flight

- During the flight check passengers are comfortable and not feeling unwell