SUSAN PARSON

Checklist

Don't Get Upset!

As required by the aeronautical knowledge and practical test standards that 14 CFR part 61 sets out for the flight instructor certificate, my instructor and I strapped ourselves into a very carefully preflighted Cessna 150 one fine summer day and went forth for me to acquire proficiency in spin entries and recoveries. Although I like to think I camouflaged it pretty well at the time, I was apprehensive to say the least. The first—demonstrated—spin was terrifying. The second, with me at the controls, was easier. We finished the initial spin training session and after a couple more the following weekend, I was even enjoying them—sort of, anyway.

I met the requirement, got my spin training endorsement, and shortly thereafter passed the practical test for my flight instructor certificate. Then it was on to teaching. I was quite determined that no student of mine would ever get me even close to a spin or other loss of control-inflight (LOC-I) situation. But of course it didn't work out that way. When an early student botched his first attempt at the power-on stall recovery in a Cessna 152, I was mighty grateful that the FAA's flight instructor certification standards included experience in spin entries and recoveries. Though my inexperience let his mistake catch me by surprise, I was at least sufficiently prepared to recognize and recover well before it became a fully-developed spin.

More than the Minimum

Though I had passed both the official (check ride) test and a modest real-life test with my student, my scant experience with spins and extreme unusual attitudes—the kind that lead to LOC-I—gnawed at me. And so, a few years ago, I found my way to a school that specializes in upset recovery training. The three-day course I took included intensive preflight and postflight "academics," which provided a confidence-building enhancement of my aerodynamics knowledge. But nothing created confidence more quickly than intensive hands-on flights that let me safely explore the edge of the flight envelope. For the first time, I really got the picture on how, and why, a cross-controlled skidding stall could put me in a place I didn't want to be. The school's highly trained instructors were fiendishly skilled at setting me up for "surprise" encounters with simulated, but very realistic, wake turbulence. We also had opportunities to practice coping with flight control failures. This training—all on my dime, by the way—was not cheap. By my reckoning, though, the knowledge, practice, and confidence it provided were priceless.

Several of the expert contributors to this issue of *FAA Safety Briefing* strongly encourage pilots to seek out Upset Prevention and Recovery Training (UPRT). If you're interested in pursuing this advice, you will find some very helpful information on what to look for at www.uprta.org, the website of the non-profit Upset Prevention and Recovery Training Association (UPRTA), which bills itself as "an international aviation organization devoted to flight training quality assurance and instructor pilot standardization." Managed by internationally-recognized experts in upset recovery, stall/spin recovery, and advanced training maneuvers, UPRTA provides quality assurance through certification programs for upset prevention and recovery training.

You might also be interested in checking out the website for ICATEE, which is the International Committee for Aviation Training in Extended Envelopes (www.icatee.org). ICATEE's 80 members include the main airframe manufacturers, major and regional airlines, national aviation authorities, safety boards, simulator manufacturers, providers specializing in upset recovery training, research institutions, and pilot representatives. ICATEE also provided support to the FAA/Industry Stall-Stick-Pusher Working Group, as well as the Aviation Rulemaking Committee on Stick Pusher and Adverse Weather.

What you learn about upset recovery prevention and training could truly save your life someday.

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