



# Parking permit

Refer to your aircraft manual for the safest way to park your aircraft.

## Trevor Robinson

**I**N A COUNTRY that experiences extremes of temperature, aircraft owners should be diligent in the parking and storage of their aircraft.

Correct parking and storage protect aircraft from the harsh environment, helping to lower maintenance costs.

Before making a tie-down kit, windscreen covers and airframe/engine blanking covers, refer to the aircraft manufacturer's maintenance and operational manuals. Parking and storage procedures differ between aircraft, and many manufacturers recommend special parking techniques.

**Parking:** Known as mooring by many USA aircraft manufacturers, parking instructions are divided into four general stages: parking, which is a maximum of an overnight stay; flyable storage, which is generally a maximum of 30 non-operational days; temporary storage, a maximum of 90 non-operational days; and permanent storage.

Engine care depends on the duration of storage. Flyable storage requires hand rotation of the propeller through five revolutions every seven days. Temporary and permanent storage require engine inhibiting according to the relevant engine manufacturer's instructions.

Although you should refer to the aircraft manufacturer's instructions for advice on parking and storage, here are some sensible guidelines.

**Tie-down area:** If you are parking your aircraft on unsealed ground, the area under and around it should be mown and free of oil or fuel contamination. The ground should be level and well drained.

If you are using tie-down pegs and have permission from the airport owner to leave them in the ground when the aircraft is away, make sure they are well marked and obvious. When selecting a tie-down spot, make sure there is sufficient clearance from aircraft movement areas. This avoids any possibility of taxiing collisions.

**Propellers:** Generally, fixed-pitch and two-blade constant-speed propellers should be put in the "10 to 4" position, as viewed from the front of the aircraft. The exception to this rule is wooden propellers. Put them in the horizontal position to allow for even moisture distribution in the wood. Wooden propellers should also have a tight fitting cover to protect them from UV radiation and other hazards. Place three blade propellers in the "Y" position.

**Engines:** A common misconception is that a short ground run is enough to satisfy

engine storage requirements. However, unless the engine is run to ensure that oil and cylinder head temperatures are in the lower normal operating range, acid and water will condense within the engine, promoting corrosion. An alternative is to turn the engine over by hand, dispersing oil evenly over its internal surfaces. As an additional precaution, when rotating the engine ensure that no piston is left at top dead centre.

**Aircraft:** Park the aircraft into the airport's prevailing wind, if possible. Fill the fuel tanks to prevent condensation entering the fuel system. If you have recently been taxiing and the brakes are hot, do not put the park brake on until the brake assembly cools. If installing covers, blanks, etc, ensure they are interlinked by cords or fitted with highly visible warning streamers. If you have pressurised containers in the aircraft, remove them. The temperature inside the cockpit of a parked aircraft can reach 60+°C, causing aerosol cans to explode and many plastics to melt. Chock both sides of the wheels. Tie-down points should be at 45° to the wing attachment point.

*Trevor Robinson is a CASA maintenance specialist.*