



Getting ready to fly: A safety readiness check



Before every flight, take a moment to slow down and check three things:

you, your aircraft and your plan.

These simple questions help reduce avoidable pressure and poor decisions once airborne.

ARE YOU READY?

Safe flights depend on pilot readiness as much as technical skill.

- » Are you physically fit and mentally focused today, or are fatigue, stress or distraction creeping in?
- » Are you current and genuinely comfortable with the type of flight you're about to undertake?
- » Is today's flight routine, or is there something different that deserves extra attention?
- » Do you have the capacity to recognise and manage the unexpected without rushing decisions?
- » If you're carrying passengers:
- » Have you set expectations about distractions, communication and sterile cockpit phases?
- » Do your passengers understand that speaking up about concerns is encouraged?
- » How will you manage any influences external to the flight that create a sense of pressure to complete the flight?

Ask yourself: *Will any of these pressures cause me to overlook my established safety controls?*

IS YOUR AIRCRAFT READY?

An aircraft can be serviceable on paper and still pose risk on the day.

- » Is the aircraft in a condition you are comfortable flying today, given the weather, loading and task?

- » Are your normal and non-normal checklists current, familiar and easy to use?
- » Is weight and balance suitable not just legally, but conservatively, for the conditions?
- » Is emergency equipment onboard, accessible, and something you could locate under stress?

Ask yourself: *If something stops going to plan, does this aircraft give me margin?*

IS YOUR PLAN SOUND?

Most workload heavy situations start with a plan that didn't allow for change.

- » Do you clearly understand today's weather, not just at departure but en route and at destination?
- » Have you thought through how you would handle deterioration, delays or diversions?
- » Are fuel margins realistic for today's conditions and your personal comfort level?
- » Are charts, documents and electronic aids current, accessible and backed up?



ABOUT RAMP CHECKS

From time to time, CASA inspectors may speak with pilots on the ground before or after a flight. These interactions are known as ramp checks.

A ramp check is a short conversation that focuses on preparedness, situational awareness and safe operation. It happens while you still have time and flexibility to think through your flight, or shortly after landing while decisions are still fresh.

As part of a ramp check, inspectors will usually ask to see relevant pilot and aircraft documents (for example, licences, medical certification and airworthiness status), and records that show how the flight was planned and conducted (such as a navigation or fuel log). They may also talk through how the flight was prepared for and managed.

These conversations are not designed to catch people out. The questions asked reflect the same fundamentals that underpin safe flying:

- » Are you ready to fly today?
- » Is your aircraft ready for this flight?
- » Is your plan well thought through and flexible?

Seen this way, a ramp check is an external prompt to pause and confirm that nothing important has been rushed, assumed or overlooked. Inspectors are there to talk through preparedness, identify emerging risks and reinforce safety-critical behaviours that support sound decision-making in flight.

Whether or not an inspector is present, using these same prompts as part of your normal routine helps build safer flying habits.

WHY READINESS MATTERS

Many serious incidents and accidents have early warning signs that appear on the ground, not in the air. Distraction, incomplete planning and assumptions about “routine” flights can quietly reduce margins before the engine even starts.

Once airborne, time and options disappear quickly. Workload increases, decisions become more time-critical, and small issues are harder to recover from.

Taking a few unhurried minutes before departure to check your readiness helps you:

- » recognise risks while you still have flexibility
- » reduce pressure and rushed decision-making in flight
- » identify when it's wise to slow down, change plans or not go at all

Building these habits into your normal pre-flight routine supports safer outcomes, whether or not an inspector is present.

SAFETY TAKEAWAY

The safest flights are the ones where risks are recognised early, while you still have time and options.



**'Controlled aerodromes and operations
– Preparing for ramp checks'**

Watch the video on Youtube

