FAA Safety Team
FAASTeam

How to Conduct Preflight Self-Briefings for Student and VFR Pilots

Post Course Worksheet

Share this worksheet with your CFI and engage them to assist you with any items you would like to explore further. As with any new skill, practice and practical application are important to develop and engrain the skills and concepts.

A note for your CFI: This post course worksheet is from the FAAST Team WINGS course *How to Conduct Preflight Self-Briefing for Student and VFR Pilots*. There is a companion document to this course for CFIs to aid you in understanding the course content and to provide guidance on how to reinforce and develop your student's preflight and inflight weather decision making skills for the topics covered in this course. This CFI companion document can be found at: https://www.faasafety.gov/gslac/ALC/libview_normal.aspx?id=278562

The following topics were covered in this course:

- You can conduct a regulatory compliant self-briefing by using automated resources
- If you plan to call Flight Service, conduct a self-briefing first
- Set personal minimums
- Us a checklist to self-brief
  - Specifies weather and aeronautical elements
  - Lists automated resource you plan to use
  - Specifies configuration for each resource to display desired output
- Use a weather log to document the significant weather
  - Depicts the type of weather
  - Shows when/where it is forecast along the route
- Verify weather for departure, en route, and destination
- Understand the limitations of NEXRAD:
  - Images are delayed
  - Know image legend: intensity can be depicted differently on different devices
  - Assume weather has moved/intensified when near strong/growing storms

- Develop a list of risks for your flight
- Have a mitigation plan for risks that may jeopardize the safety of the flight
- Apply self-briefing skills in the cockpit
    - Continuously monitor the weather
    - Make decisions for safety.
    - Verify flight conditions visually, don't just rely on METARS in flight
- Use Prog (Prognosis) Charts to monitor weather days in advance of your flight
- If your flight has a "must-be-there" element
    - Have a Plan-B
    - Avoid being pressured into flying in dangerous conditions
- Assess your own airworthiness prior to flight. Ensure you are fit to fly
- Provide PIREPs to help other pilots and weather forecasters
- Follow a transition to self-briefing
    - Validate your process and "no-go-no" logic with a CFI or call Flight Service
    - When you consistently make good decisions, then you have developed the skills and judgment necessary to self-brief
- Consult a CFI (or call Flight Service) when in doubt or you plan to do something new

The following are examples of practical things you can work on with your CFI to apply the concepts in this course to your self-briefing process and cockpit decision making.

Practice Item	Done
Work with your CFI to set personal minimums and have a strategy on how/when to advance.	
Develop your self-briefing checklist. Identify the automated resources you will use and how each resource would be configured for each checklist item. Conduct a self-brief in front of your CFI. Have your CFI critique your briefing. Alternately, call Flight Service after the self-brief and see if you missed anything. If so, analyze your approach and make adjustments.	
Identify the closest airport(s) to you that can present high density altitude on a hot day. Fly to one of these airports with a CFI on a hot day and practice a high Density Altitude (DA) departure. If there are no high-altitude airports near you, have your CFI simulate the effects of high DA at a local airport.	
Study delays associated with NEXRAD while on the ground. When a thunderstorm is approaching your location (eg your home), monitor the storm on your computer or tablet while watching the storm from your window. Notice the difference in the weather outside your window to that depicted on the screen. This delay can be even longer in the cockpit when receiving the weather via ADS-B.	
Conduct flights in various low visibility scenarios with your CFI (e.g. a hazy day, or dark night). Fly toward the sun or away to see the effects on the visibility. At night, fly to an airport surrounded by fields to experience the lack of visual clues. Develop the skills needed to recognize reduced visibility during the briefing, and develop the skills needed to handle, avoid, or escape from these conditions.	
As a VFR pilot you should not put yourself in a position to inadvertently enter IFR/IMC. However, if this does happen to you, you should be able to safely get out of IMC. Work with your instructor to simulate entry in IMC and hone the skills to control your aircraft as you execute an evasive maneuver.	
Work with your instructor to know how to communicate with ATC in the event you encounter deteriorating weather on your flight and need help.	
Practice submitting PIREPs.	