

# Thomas P. Turner's Mastery of Flight®

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## FLYING LESSONS for February 26, 2026

FLYING LESSONS uses recent mishap reports to consider what *might* have contributed to accidents, so you can make better decisions if you face similar circumstances. In most cases design characteristics of a specific airplane have little direct bearing on the possible causes of aircraft accidents—but knowing how your airplane's systems respond can make the difference in your success as the scenario unfolds. So apply these FLYING LESSONS to the specific airplane you fly. Verify all technical information before applying it to your aircraft or operation, with manufacturers' data and recommendations taking precedence. **You are pilot in command and are ultimately responsible for the decisions you make.**

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### *This week's LESSONS*

Last week's *LESSONS* were the second part of a discussion on engine-out procedures and techniques. [Part One](#) explored the difference between Best Glide and Landing Without Power speeds. [Part Two](#) looked at distraction—**The Little Things**—that can (and sometimes do) escalate to disaster. I promised this week to continue with the worst-case scenario of an engine-out glide with an obscured windscreen. I'll have to get back to that.

**But two topics have arisen** this week concerning the accident that prompted Part 2 (one in [this video](#) by reader and well-known YouTube authority Scott Perdue). They compel me to take this deviation with two *LESSONS critical to flying safety for us all*.

See:

<https://thomaspturner.com/flying-lessons-weekly/flying-lessons-for-february-12-2026/>

<https://thomaspturner.com/flying-lessons-weekly/flying-lessons-for-february-19-2026/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MfOpffYHMew>

#### **LESSON 1: If you notice an inflight engine anomaly:**

1. **Fly the airplane.** Nothing is more important than maintaining control and flying the airspeed for optimal performance under existing conditions. What constitutes "optimal" may vary (Best Glide vs. Least Rate of Descent,  $V_{YSE}$  vs.  $V_{CRUISE\ CLIMB}$ , etc). Use all available resources and whatever makes sense for the capability you have left.
2. **Immediately turn toward the best close landing option.** You may be able to remedy the problem by following a checklist or using your systems knowledge. You may even be able to contact resources outside your airplane for assistance and ideas. But **don't waste time flying away from your best option** while you try. Unless you can positively determine the issue was the result of something you did or did not do, and you correct it by undoing or not doing it, you *are* going to land at the best close option.
3. **In a twin, perform a precautionary engine shutdown** and feather the appropriate propeller. You pay so much normally to run two engines to fly your airplane. Now's the time to get your money's worth by flying on one, limiting the damage on the other and, more importantly, avoiding a situation where the abnormally operating engine might unexpectedly fail at a slower speed, closer to the ground.
4. **Fly directly to the airport or emergency field.** Fly directly to it, then spiral down over it. If Air Traffic Control, trying to help, suggests a vector for a long straight-in or some other approach—tell them no. Get to the landing zone first, then maneuver to land.
5. **With no loss of power yet, or only partial power lost,** maintain altitude until over your landing zone. Don't run out of altitude and power short of your target. If Air Traffic Control

directs you to descend sooner—thinking, most likely, that it will help—tell them no, you'll descend over the landing zone.

6. **Leave retractable landing gear up** until the very last minute, if you extend it at all. Gear extension substantially increases rate of descent, increases the hazard of stall trying to stretch a glide, and in many cases may increase the risk of loss of control during landing. Accident history has convinced me that a gear-up landing should be the standard response to an engine-out glide. **The exception:** If you're high on short final **and** the surface is one you'd normally be able to take off from (a runway, road or very firm, close-cut field), then you might choose to put the gear down. Even then it may be better to keep the gear up, maintain airspeed and glidepath, and slide the airplane on under control to minimize the impact on its occupants.
7. **Get the airplane on the ground**, then focus attention to the problem. It might be incredibly inconvenient and costly to be one the ground alive somewhere without maintenance and other support, perhaps even in a cold and remote field. That's totally preferable to the alternative.

**Don't wait** for an anomaly to escalate into something your trusting passengers—your family—and you do not survive.

**You may have different ideas** about how you'd respond to an engine problem in flight. There may be some room for variation. But if your plan does not include **immediately deviating to the nearest suitable place to land and flying directly there while maintaining altitude** until over the landing zone, then you're not heeding the *LESSONS* of those who have gone before.

**A few weeks ago** my *LESSONS* focused on pilot psychology—that **pilots are pessimists in training**, expecting and actively looking for problems and ready to change plans and snap to emergency procedures, while **pilots are optimists in routine flying** with a tendency to downplay or even completely dismiss abnormal or emergency indications in flight. The culture of aviation values and rewards a pilot's heroic performance in an emergency greater than it does a pilot's ability to make decisions that deescalate the condition and avoid the need for a heroic response. We need to change that culture.

See <https://thomaspturner.com/flying-lessons-weekly/flying-lessons-for-january-22-2025/>

**If you have time** while flying directly to your best landing option, run your checklists and try to correct the anomaly. But that's secondary. Too many pilots, some highly qualified and very well respected, have fallen into the trap of optimism. A little pessimism may have saved their lives and those of their passengers.

## **LESSON 2: Secure your baggage**

**The following was first posted** on the [American Bonanza Society website's Members Forum](#), but it applies to pilots of all aircraft types:

An NTSB Senior Aviation Accident Investigator currently working [CEN26FA114](#) [has made] this request:

"The investigation is still ongoing, but one aspect of the investigation I want to please discuss with [pilots], is that of cargo securement. Onboard the airplane were various bags, suitcases, office supplies, and a cooler. When we showed up to do our onsite documentation work at the accident site, we found all that cargo had shifted forward during the accident sequence to the cockpit.

"I please ask if [pilot groups] would consider perhaps putting a safety reminder out to their members about securing all cargo onboard their airplanes?"

Apparently baggage on board the airplane that was not in the aft baggage compartment was not secured and became a factor in the survivability of this accident.

All pilots: Please remember to use seat belts or other tie-downs to secure all objects in your airplane before flight to prevent them from becoming lethal missiles in a potentially otherwise survivable landing.

See:

<https://www.bonanza.org/community/member-forum/general-discussion/posts/feb-2026/ntsb-request-regarding-the-ron-timmermans-crash/>  
<https://thomaspturner.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/2026.0211-A36-TX.pdf>

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## Debrief

Readers write about recent *LESSONS*:

Next week I'll focus on your many reader comments from the past few weeks and those this week's *LESSONS* may prompt. Then I'll re-intercept our original course and resume discussion of engine-failure scenarios and the *LESSONS* to be learned from the experiences of others—bad and good.

More to say? Let us learn from you, at [mastery.flight.training@cox.net](mailto:mastery.flight.training@cox.net)

See <https://nafimmentor.org>

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Robert Sparks, Mark Sletten, Thomas Jaszewski, Douglas Olson, David Field, Michael McRobert

**NEW THIS WEEK:** Wayne Colburn



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