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# Bagasmashers, Stratolauncher, Winter

**Issue #34**

**December 14, 2011**

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Thank you for taking the time to read this safety message. Hope the new design did not catch you off-guard. I had a few complaints that things were not lined up properly, so underwent a new design in hopes that it would clean things up. After 33 issues, I figured it was about time anyway.

Video of the Month: Stratolauncher

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## Quote of the Month

*"The important thing in aeroplanes is that they shall be speedy." - Baron Manfred Von Richthofen*

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## Stratolauncher, by Microsoft

By Eric Pfeiffer | The Sideshow

Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen is teaming up with aerospace pioneer Burt Rutan to build a giant machine that is part airplane and part spaceship. The new vehicle will be able to transport people and cargo into Earth's orbit and is scheduled to be commercially available by 2016.



Unlike traditional rockets, the Stratolaunch will not require a launch pad for liftoff. Instead, the plane will ascend to a heightened elevation--and then the rocket portion of the craft will release and blast the ship into space.

Powered by six 747 engines, the new craft should also be far more fuel efficient than traditional shuttle launches, since it will bypass the standard supply of expensive rocket fuel needed to propel a shuttle up from the ground.

The craft will also be enormous, with a wingspan of 385 feet, (making it larger than a football field) while weighing 1.2 million pounds.

And the Stratolaunch will not be restrained by the factors that normally dictate when a shuttle can launch into space from the ground.

Allen and Rutan are competing with other private companies in a race to deliver people and goods to the International Space Station, now that NASA has cancelled its space shuttle program.

The pair are teaming up with another Internet mogul, Elon Musk, founder of PayPal and Tesla, who is providing funds for the spaceship and booster components.

Allen is no stranger to space exploration, having already won the Ansari X Prize in 2004, for his sponsorship of a craft that went into space but not into orbit. If all goes to plan, the Stratolaunch program will be involved in satellite transport--while also promoting space tourism.

## Winter Flying Tidbits

One of the best experiences is flying

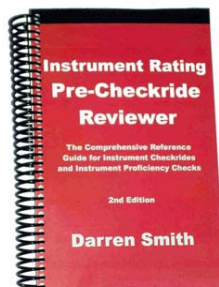




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over white, rolling terrain. The pristine views can compare to no other flight save flying over blue Caribbean water. When undertaking a winter flight, a few simple rules will keep you and your passengers safe.

- 1. Preflight** - dress very warmly to avoid winter chill. Peel off those layers and stow in the aircraft. Be sure all frost & ice are removed from the aircraft especially flight control surfaces. Ensure you meet your personal flight minimums using the IM SAFE checklist. See appendix C for the Personal Minimums Checklist.
- 2. Use an engine warmer** - to protect your engine during cold starts. Preheat to at least 30-40 degrees F. Use proper weight oil during winter.
- 3. Use good aeronautical judgment** and decision-making - from your weather briefing to flying in icing conditions, be sure that you execute a safe plan and always have a way out. Consider filing a flight plan if you plan to leave the immediate airport environment. Be aware of changing weather and get enroute updates.
- 4. Smoothness** in everything you do - apply power changes, control inputs, and flight maneuvers as gently as possible. If you face an emergency, stay calm, don't panic, and don't give up.
- 5. Keep an eye on carb temp** - and use carb heat as necessary. Plan on using it earlier than manufacturers recommendations and often. Test your carb heat during run-up at high and lowest RPM settings.
- 6. Flight Conditions** - Watch for ice buildups and understand how rime and clear ice develops. Remain instrument current; you never know when a white out can prevent a VFR landing. Read my article on "Avoiding Airframe Icing" in this section.
- 7. Ensure that cabin heat works** - be sure that cabin heat does not introduce exhaust gases into the cockpit due to a leaking heat exchanger.
- 8. Survival** - keep extra layers of clothing and blankets in the unlikely event of an off airport landing. Basic first aid supplies, VHF handheld, flares, matches, strobe lights, and a signaling mirror are also useful. Basic shelter can be created using the fuselage and plant material. Never sleep or sit directly on snow to protect your core body temperature.

## What Happens to Your Baggage?

Ever wonder why airlines lose, delay and damage bags? We asked an airline baggage handler who, of course, spoke to us anonymously, what it's like in the belly of the beast and on the tarmac. What he told us might help you arrive with your bag and its contents intact.



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**What goes on behind the curtain?**

You might be amazed at how much manpower it takes to put a passenger aircraft in the air. Obviously, the majority of time, you'll only see the pilots, flight attendants, and gate agents. That already is a lot of people, but there are more people working outside to get you to your destination. Once you leave your bag at the check-in counter, it goes through a series of conveyer belts, where it may or may not be opened and searched by TSA, until it reaches the pier for your departing flight. It is then sorted into carts by one ramp agent who then brings it planeside for other ramp agents to load on the airplane. You may not be able to see much from your window seat, but we can see all around the tarmac. Other than bags, there is a lot of other cargo that gets transported by air. We see everything from human remains, to mail to fruits and vegetables coming on and off the plane. We're also the guys directing the plane to its parking position at the gate, securing the aircraft, and hooking up the ground power and air. Also, since planes don't go in reverse, we are the guys driving the push back tug, ensuring that aircraft do not come in contact with each other.

**Confessions of a Bag Handler**

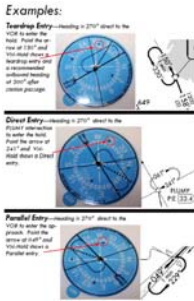
- How do bags get damaged?
  - How do bags get lost?
  - What kind of suitcases get damaged least/most?
  - Why don't airlines cover certain things?
  - Have you ever seen theft?
  - How can passengers prevent losing bags?
  - What's it like to work in that environment?
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