

Tips & Tricks for Winter Launching

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Winter launching can be a lot of fun, and, here in Minnesota, we have a lot of winter! However, there are a few important things to keep in mind when you go out in the snow to launch your rockets.

Rocket Recommendations

- Personally, I stick with rockets that use either streamers or nylon parachutes. Plastic parachutes can get stiff in the cold and refuse to open. This results in the "wad of cold plastic" recovery system; it doesn't work too well.
- If you do fly a rocket with a plastic parachute, dust it with talcum powder and don't pack the chute into the rocket until just before you're ready to launch it.
- Remember that plastic fin units become brittle in low temperatures; a hard landing may break a fin.

Recovery

- Face it, your rocket will land in the snow. Get out there and pick it up as soon as possible.
- The first, most important thing to do is to pull the expended engine out of the rocket! The cardboard casings used in common black powder motors will absorb water. When they absorb water, they swell and expand. I've seen wet motor casings permanently stuck in rockets, and I've seen people yank the entire motor mount from a rocket while trying to remove a stuck, wet motor casing.
- Take the rocket back to somewhere dry and use a soft rag or towel to wipe all of the snow from it before the snow has a chance to start melting. Make sure to remove any snow that got inside the rocket and any that was compacted up around the motor mount.
- Only fly painted rockets as unpainted rockets could absorb water.
- If a rocket becomes damp inside, don't reassemble it at the field! Take it home and allow it to dry completely before stuffing it back together.

How to Dress

Warm clothes, layers, a hat, good socks, boots, gloves. (Use common sense!)

See you at the flying field!