

Safe Flying Tip number one:

Runway Incursions

Planes collide on runways and over runways many times each year. When you are within 10 miles of the airport you must demand a sterile cockpit. A sterile cockpit is one in which all conversation is only about other traffic. No chatting, no small talk. The sky is huge and your chances of hitting another plane in the sky are miniscule. Near the airport and at the airport itself, the chances of hitting another plane goes up substantially. Recently, two planes collided over Republic airport on Long Island. A Cessna 152 on a training flight and a twin-engine aircraft entering the pattern. Fortunately, both planes landed safely which is very rare. Recently, at Oshkosh, a P-58 Mustang landed on top of another P-58 during landing. Both pilots died. Flying around the airport requires your constant vigilance. You can deputize your passenger to help you point out other aircraft.

KEEP YOUR HEAD ON A SWIVEL AROUND THE AIRPORT!!!

Listening to the radio transmissions of other pilots in the pattern is a big help to your situational awareness of the location of other aircraft. The FAA has standard pattern entries and departures so all pilots know where one another are located. I always enter the pattern 50 feet below the recommended traffic pattern altitude so the planes in the pattern stand out against the blue sky and are much easier to see. Once in the pattern I maintain the recommended traffic pattern altitude.

Proper announcement of your location is helpful to other pilots.

Proper: "Brookhaven Airport, Cessna entering left downwind, runway 33, Brookhaven."

Also announce turning base leg, final, and clearing the runway.

This landing Piper Cherokee did not see the Stinson about to take off. Low wing plane landing over high wing taking off = bad visibility.

In Cincinnati, Ohio in 2004 a Cessna 152 and Cessna 172 collided on final approach. The 172 made a normal approach. The 152 made a short approach, turning final at 300 feet and very close in. The 152 did not announce turning final and did not listen to the 172 transmissions. The 172 descended onto the 152 and the collision happened. There were serious injuries.

The lessons to be learned are:

- The traffic pattern is the most likely place you will come in contact with another aircraft.
- You must keep your head on a swivel in the traffic pattern.
- You must fly a standard traffic pattern in order to assist other aircraft in knowing your position.
- You must make proper announcements.
- You must listen to other transmissions.
- If you are not 100% sure there is not another aircraft below you while on final approach, a brief slip might help you see other aircraft more easily.
- Ask your passengers to look for other planes while in close proximity of airports.
- Maintain a sterile cockpit when in the vicinity of all airports. A sterile cockpit means no chatting with your passengers. You need your passengers to know they need to be all business when in the vicinity of airports.
- Keep your cockpit windows clean to make it easier to spot traffic.