

Safe Flying Tip number three: Fog

Living on Long Island, summer Fog is a local weather condition that pilots must deal with on a regular basis.

Flying on a Foggy night may have been the reason for JFK Jr.'s fatal accident.

A contributing factor was trying to accommodate the schedule of one of his passengers.

Let's talk about Fog.

Fog can be accurately predicted and avoided. When the temperature and dew point meet you get Fog every time.

When the sun goes down the temperature drops about five degrees.

If you check the weather before you fly and compare the temperature and dew point you can avoid fog.

You want to have a minimum of five degrees spread between the temperature and dew point. This spread must be ten degrees at sunset, because you know the temperature will drop five degrees when the sun sets.

Is there any way you can tell if you are safe from any fog encounter without checking weather?

YES: If you look up to the sky and you see a deep blue color, you will not have fog. If you look up and see a gray misty looking sky, there is a chance you may get fog. It is that simple.

As you gain experience as a pilot you will learn that you may take a chance and fly on certain misty looking days if you have an 8 degree temperature dew point spread and a solid gold out.

“A SOLID GOLD OUT”

“A SOLID GOLD OUT”

“A SOLID GOLD OUT”

These are powerful words that will keep you and your loves ones safe.

Regarding Fog, what would be a solid gold out?

Having enough fuel to fly to an area where the temperature dew point spread was well in excess of ten degrees would be your solid gold out.

Fog is usually associated with summer time flying and very common on Long Island.

Plan your departures for late morning at which time the sun has caused the spread to widen. Plan your arrivals to be early afternoon before there is any cooling from the setting sun.

If temperature dew point spreads are less than 5 degrees during the day and 8 degrees at sunset, then you should not get very far from an airport.

It will be safe to fly in the traffic pattern, but not wise to venture off on a cross country.

Some lessons to be learned about Fog are:

- Do not leave the pattern if the temperature dew point spread is less than 5 degrees.
- At sunset, you need an 8 degree spread.
- If there is deep blue sky you will not get fog.
- When the temperature dew points are very close, you must have a “Solid Gold Out”.

