

# Safe Flying Tip number five:

## Thunderstorms

FLYING AROUND THUNDERSTORMS MAY BE THE SCARIEST PART OF ALL FLYING. Summertime means not only fog, but also thunderstorms.

How do you protect yourself and your passengers from the dangers of flying when thunderstorms are predicted?

First of all, Thunderstorms are predicted on most summer days. If you never try to fly when thunderstorms are predicted, you will miss many great summertime destinations.

It is a wonderful time to be a pilot as we now have better thunderstorm predicting and observing information than ever before.

To aid you in the prediction of thunderstorms, we have numerous weather sites you can visit for free. We have the weather channel. We have NOAA weather. We have TIVO so you can tape the weather channel and fast forward through the commercials and get right to the radar summary charts showing all the storms, where they are and what direction they are moving.

Garmin makes a hand held, battery operated, GPS that combines with XM radio to give you real time weather. The GPS is only \$1800 and the XM basic weather subscription is about \$30 per month.

You can look at the Garmin 396 screen at home and see if there are any storms in the vicinity. Is it safe to go boating, flying, golf, or have a picnic? What an amazing, life saving device.

You can see where the storms are, which way they are moving, and predict when they will be gone.

On many days that Flight Service predicts thunderstorms, there will be no storms at all. Not even one. As long as you have a solid good out it is safe to begin a flight when thunderstorms are forecast. Sure, on occasion, you will have to turn back home and scrub the mission, but numerous days you will make the entire flight without even one drop of rain.

Some lessons about thunderstorms are:

- Fly early in the day. Be on the ground by noon before the heat of the day has caused the storms to build.
- Avoid all storms by at least twenty miles.
- The nastier the storm, the quicker it will move through the area.
- You can often fly up to the storm. Land; tie down the plane very carefully. Wait for the storm to pass and continue your flight within a few hours.
- Learn how to use the Garmin 396 GPS and the XM radio weather information to predict and analyze thunderstorms.