

Cirrus Airframe Parachute System (CAPS)

The Cirrus Airframe Parachute System (CAPS) is designed to lower the aircraft and its passengers to the ground in the event of a life-threatening emergency. CAPS deployment is likely to result in damage to the airframe and, possible injury to aircraft occupants, its use should not be taken lightly. Instead, possible CAPS activation scenarios should be well thought out and mentally practiced by every Cirrus pilot. Pilots who regularly conduct CAPS training and think about using CAPS will often have a higher probability of deploying CAPS when necessary.

The following discussion is meant to guide your thinking about CAPS activation. Cirrus also recommends that pilots discuss CAPS deployment scenarios with instructors as well as fellow pilots through forums such as the Cirrus Owners and Pilots Association. In the event of a spin or loss of aircraft control, immediate CAPS activation is required. (See Section 3) In other situations, CAPS activation is at the informed discretion of the pilot in command. The following discussion is intended to be informative, not directive. It is the responsibility of you, the pilot, to determine when and how the CAPS will be used. It is important to understand, however, that numerous fatalities that have occurred in Cirrus aircraft accidents likely could have been avoided if pilots had made the timely decision to deploy CAPS. It is also important to note that CAPS has been activated by pilots at speeds in excess of 180 knots on multiple occasions with successful outcomes. While the best speed to activate CAPS is below 140 knots indicated airspeed, a timely activation is most important for loss of control situations.

Deployment Scenarios

This section describes possible scenarios in which the activation of the CAPS is appropriate. This list is not intended to be exclusive, but merely illustrative of the type of circumstances when CAPS deployment could be the only means of saving the occupants of the aircraft.

Mid-Air Collision

A mid-air collision likely will render the airplane unflyable by damaging the control system or primary structure. If a mid-air collision occurs, immediately evaluate if the airplane is controllable and structurally capable of continued safe flight and landing. Unless it is apparent that structural and control system damage has not occurred, CAPS

activation is recommended. If you are not sure of the condition of the aircraft following a mid-air collision, CAPS activation is recommended.

Structural Failure

Structural failure may result from many situations, such as: encountering severe gusts at speeds above the airplane's structural cruising speed, inadvertent full control movements above the airplane's maneuvering speed, or exceeding the design load factor while maneuvering. If a structural failure occurs, CAPS activation is recommended.

Loss of Control

Loss of control may result from many situations, such as: a control system failure (disconnected or jammed controls); severe wake turbulence, severe turbulence causing upset, severe airframe icing, or pilot disorientation caused by vertigo or panic. If loss of control occurs, the CAPS should be activated immediately.

• WARNING •

In the event of a spin, immediate CAPS activation is mandatory. Under no circumstances should the pilot attempt recovery from a spin other than by CAPS activation.

Landing Required in Terrain not Permitting a Safe Landing

If a forced landing on an unprepared surface is required CAPS activation is recommended unless the pilot in command concludes there is a high likelihood that a safe landing can be accomplished. If a condition requiring a forced landing occurs over rough or mountainous terrain, over water out of gliding distance to land, over widespread ground fog or at night, CAPS activation is strongly recommended. Numerous fatalities that have occurred in Cirrus aircraft accidents likely could have been avoided if pilots had made the timely decision to deploy CAPS.

While attempting to glide to an airfield to perform a power off landing, the pilot must be continuously aware of altitude and ability to successfully perform the landing. Pilot must make the determination by 2000' AGL if the landing is assured or if CAPS will be required.

Pilot Incapacitation

Pilot incapacitation may be the result of anything from a pilot's medical condition to a bird strike that injures the pilot. If incapacitation occurs and the passengers are not trained to land the aircraft, CAPS

activation by the passengers is highly recommended. This scenario should be discussed with passengers prior to flight and all appropriate passengers should be briefed on CAPS operation so they could effectively deploy CAPS if required.

General Deployment Information

Deployment Speed

The maximum speed at which deployment has been demonstrated is 140 KIAS. Deployment at higher speeds could subject the parachute and aircraft to excessive loads that could result in structural failure. Once a decision has been made to deploy the CAPS, make all reasonable efforts to slow to the minimum possible airspeed. However, if time and altitude are critical, and/or ground impact is imminent, the CAPS should be activated regardless of airspeed.

Deployment Altitude

No minimum altitude for deployment has been set. This is because the actual altitude loss during a particular deployment depends upon the airplane's airspeed, altitude and attitude at deployment as well as other environmental factors. In all cases, however, the chances of a successful deployment increase with altitude. In the event of a spin, immediate CAPS activation is mandatory regardless of altitude. In other situations, the pilot in command may elect to troubleshoot a mechanical problem or attempt to descend out of icing conditions if altitude and flight conditions permit. As a data point, altitude loss from level flight deployments has been demonstrated at less than 400 feet. Deployment at such a low altitude leaves little or no time for the aircraft to stabilize under the canopy or for the cabin to be secured. A low altitude deployment increases the risk of injury or death and should be avoided. If circumstances permit, it is advisable to activate the CAPS at or above 2,000 feet AGL.

While CAPS activation above 2,000 feet is not necessarily safer than activation at 2,000 feet in terms of the altitude needed to deploy the parachute and slow the descent of the aircraft, there are other risks associated with delaying deployment. Distraction, deterioration in flight conditions, aircraft damage, pilot injury or incapacitation all could take place above 2,000 feet and prevent a timely deployment.

At any altitude, once the CAPS is determined to be the only alternative available for saving the aircraft occupants, deploy the system without delay.

Deployment Attitude

The CAPS has been tested in all flap configurations at speeds ranging from V_{so} to V_a . Most CAPS testing was accomplished from a level attitude. Deployment from a spin was also tested. From these tests it was found that as long as the parachute was introduced to the free air by the rocket, it would successfully recover the aircraft into its level descent attitude under parachute.

Emergency Procedures Guidance

Although this section provides procedures for handling most emergencies and critical flight situations that could arise in the aircraft, it is not a substitute for proper flight training, thorough knowledge of the airplane, and general aviation techniques. A thorough study of the information in this handbook while on the ground will help you prepare for time-critical situations in the air.

CAPS Guidance

All Cirrus aircraft are equipped with a pilot or passenger activated ballistic airframe parachute system. The system is capable of lowering the aircraft and occupants safely to the ground for life threatening emergencies. CAPS provides pilots and passengers an alternative means of handling various life threatening emergency situations. In many cases CAPS may offer a safer option for occupants as compared to continued flight or traditional countermeasures. Pilots flying Cirrus aircraft must be properly trained and familiar with CAPS guidance, limitations, and operating procedures. Refer to Section 10, *Cirrus Airframe Parachute System (CAPS)*, for CAPS deployment and guidance information.

Preflight Planning

Enroute emergencies caused by weather can be minimized or eliminated by careful flight planning and good judgment when unexpected weather is encountered.

Preflight Inspections/Maintenance

In-flight mechanical problems in the aircraft will be extremely rare if proper preflight inspections and maintenance are practiced. Always perform a thorough walk-around *Preflight Inspection* before any flight to ensure that no damage occurred during the previous flight or while the airplane was on the ground. Pay special attention to any oil leaks or fuel stains that could indicate engine problems.

Methodology

Aircraft emergencies are very dynamic events. Because of this, it is impossible to address every action a pilot might take to handle a situation. However, four basic actions can be applied to any emergency. They are:

Maintain Aircraft Control — Many minor aircraft emergencies turn into major ones when the pilot fails to maintain aircraft control. Remember, do not panic and do not fixate on a particular problem. Over-attention to a faulty warning light during an instrument approach can lead to a pilot induced unusual attitude and possibly worse. To avoid this, even in an emergency: aviate, navigate, and communicate, in this order. Never let anything interfere with your control of the airplane. Never stop flying.

Analyze the Situation — Once you are able to maintain control of the aircraft, assess the situation. Look at the engine parameters. Listen to the engine. Determine what the airplane is telling you.

Take Appropriate Action — In most situations, the procedures listed in this section will either correct the aircraft problem or allow safe recovery of the aircraft. Follow them and use good pilot judgment.

• Note •

In an in-flight emergency, pressing and holding the COM transfer button for 2 seconds will tune the emergency frequency of 121.500 MHz. If the display is available, it will also show it in the “Active” frequency window.

The Cirrus Airframe Parachute System (CAPS) should be activated in the event of a spin. It should also be used in other life-threatening emergencies where CAPS deployment is determined to be safer than continued flight and landing. Refer to Section 10, *Cirrus Airframe Parachute System (CAPS)* for CAPS deployment information and landing considerations.

Land as soon as Conditions Permit — Once you have handled the emergency, assess your next move. Handle any non-critical “clean-up” items in the checklist and put the aircraft on the ground. Remember, even if the airplane appears to be in sound condition, it may not be.

Circuit Breakers

Many procedures involve manipulating circuit breakers. The following criteria should be followed during “Circuit Breaker” steps:

- Circuit breakers that are “SET” should be checked for normal condition. If the circuit breaker is not “Set”, it may be reset only once. If the circuit breaker opens again, do not reset.
- Circuit breakers that “PULL” should only be pulled and not reset.

- Circuit breakers that “CYCLE” should be pulled, delayed for several seconds, and reset only once. Allow sufficient cooling time for circuit breakers that are reset through a “CYCLE” procedure.

Memory Items

Checklist steps emphasized by underlining such as the example below, should be memorized for accomplishment without reference to the procedure.

1. Best Glide Speed ESTABLISH

Airspeeds for Emergency Operations

Maneuvering Speed:

3600 lb 140 KIAS

Best Glide:

All Weights 92 KIAS

Emergency Landing (Engine-out):

Flaps Up 90 KIAS

Flaps 50% 85 KIAS

Flaps 100% 80 KIAS

Engine Failures

Engine Failure On Takeoff (Low Altitude)

1. Best Glide or Landing Speed (as appropriate)..... ESTABLISH
2. Mixture CUTOFF
3. Fuel Selector OFF
4. Ignition Switch OFF
5. Flaps AS REQUIRED

If time permits:

6. Power Lever IDLE
7. Fuel Pump OFF
8. Bat-Alt Master Switches OFF
9. Seat Belts ENSURE SECURED

Amplification

• WARNING •

If engine failure is accompanied by fuel fumes in the cockpit, or if internal engine damage is suspected, move Mixture Control to CUTOFF and do not attempt a restart.

If the engine fails immediately after becoming airborne, abort on the runway if possible. In most cases, when the engine fails below 500 feet AGL, the landing should be made straight ahead, turning only to avoid obstructions. In such a case, lower the nose to maintain airspeed and establish a glide attitude. If the engine fails between 500 feet and 2000 feet AGL, CAPS activation most likely is the safest option. After establishing a glide for landing or activating CAPS, perform as many of the checklist items as time permits.

Engine Failure In Flight

1. Best Glide Speed..... ESTABLISH
2. Fuel Selector..... SWITCH TANKS
3. Ignition Switch..... CHECK, BOTH
4. Fuel Pump BOOST
5. Power Lever ½ OPEN
6. Mixture ... IDLE CUTOFF then slowly ADVANCE until engine starts
If engine does not start:
7. Perform CAPS Deployment or Emergency Landing Without Engine Power checklist, as required.
If engine starts:
8. CHTs and Oil Temperature VERIFY within GREEN range, warm engine at partial power if required.

Amplification

• WARNING •

If engine failure is accompanied by fuel fumes in the cockpit, or if internal engine damage is suspected, move Mixture Control to CUTOFF, Fuel Selector to OFF, and do not attempt a restart.

If the engine fails at altitude, pitch as necessary to establish best glide speed. While gliding toward a suitable landing area, attempt to identify the cause of the failure and correct it. If altitude or terrain does not permit a safe landing, CAPS deployment may be required. Refer to Section 10, *Cirrus Airframe Parachute System (CAPS)* for CAPS deployment scenarios and landing considerations.

Excessive engine cooling may be experienced during long descents resulting in low engine oil and cylinder head temperatures. This may result in the engine not accelerating properly when power is reapplied. If oil or cylinder head temperatures are excessively low then the engine should be operated at partial power until the temperatures are sufficient for full power operation.

Possible Engine Failure Causes

Improper Fuel Management: If the engine failure cause is determined to be improper fuel management, turn off Fuel Pump and resume flight.

Engine Driven Fuel Pump Failure: If fuel management is correct, failure of the engine driven fuel pump or a clogged fuel filter is probable. An engine driven fuel pump failure is probable when engine will only operate with fuel pump on HIGH BOOST/PRIME. Reduce power to 75% or less and land as soon as practical. Do not set the mixture too rich for descent or landing.

Improper Mixture Setting: If fuel management is correct and the engine driven fuel pump is functioning properly, it is possible the mixture is either too lean or too rich.

Possible over rich conditions:

- Very low power settings at high altitude and rich mixture.
- Very low power settings with the fuel pump on and rich mixture.
- Severe induction system blockage, leakage, or turbo failure and rich mixture.

Possible over lean conditions:

- Advancing the throttle from a lean condition before enriching the mixture
- HIGH BOOST/PRIME switched off from a lean condition before enriching the mixture.
- Vapor in fuel line (likely to happen in very hot ambient conditions at altitude).
- High altitude descent in lean condition with no corresponding throttle or mixture change.

Above 18,000 Feet

The manifold pressure should be maintained at or above 15 in.Hg (bottom of the green arc on the manifold pressure gage) when the aircraft is operating above 18,000 feet. If the manifold pressure is reduced below 15 in.Hg and the Power Lever positioned close to or at idle, the engine may cease combustion. Upon advancing the Power Lever, if the wind milling engine does not immediately regain power, the following procedure should be used:

1. Electric Fuel Pump..... LOW BOOST
2. Power Lever ½ OPEN
3. Mixture ControlFULL RICH, then LEAN until engine starts then slowly advance to FULL RICH
4. Power Lever AS REQUIRED
5. Mixture AS REQUIRED
6. Electric Fuel Pump..... AS REQUIRED

Airstart

Engine Airstart

1. Bat Master Switches ON
2. Power Lever OPEN ½ INCH
3. Mixture RICH, AS REQ'D
4. Fuel Selector SWITCH TANKS
5. Ignition Switch BOTH
6. Fuel Pump BOOST
7. Alt Master Switches OFF
8. Starter (Propeller not Windmilling) ENGAGE
9. Power Lever slowly INCREASE
10. Alt Master Switches ON
11. CHTs and Oil Temperature VERIFY within GREEN range,
warm engine at partial power if required.
12. If engine will not start, perform *Forced Landing* checklist.

Amplification

Switching tanks and turning the fuel pump on will enhance starting if fuel contamination was the cause of the failure. Leaning the mixture and then slowly enriching mixture may correct faulty mixture control.

Engine airstarts may be performed during 1g flight anywhere within the normal operating envelope of the airplane.