

Taxiing, Steering, and Braking Practices

Cirrus aircraft use a castoring nose wheel and rely on aerodynamic forces and differential braking for directional control while taxiing. Proper braking practices are therefore critical to avoid potential damage to the brakes.

The most common cause of brake damage and/or failure is the creation of excessive heat through improper braking practices. Pilots unaccustomed to free castoring nose wheel steering may be inclined to “ride” the brakes to maintain constant taxi speeds and use the brakes excessively for steering.

Proper Operating Practices

When taxiing, directional control is accomplished with rudder deflection and intermittent braking (toe taps) as necessary. Use only as much power as is necessary to achieve forward movement. Deceleration or taxi speed control using brakes but without a reduction in power will result in increased brake temperature.

On flat, smooth, hard surfaces, do not exceed 1000 RPM maximum continuous engine speed for taxi. Power settings slightly above 1000 RPM are permissible to start motion, for turf, soft surfaces, and on inclines. Use minimum power to maintain constant taxi speed.

“Riding the brakes” while taxiing is similar to *driving a car with one foot on the brake and one foot on the gas*. This causes a continuous build up of energy that would otherwise be moving the airplane.

Observe the following operating practices:

- Verify that the parking brake is completely disengaged before taxi.
- The rudder is effective for steering on the ground and should be used.
- Use only as much power (throttle) as is necessary to achieve forward movement. Keep in mind, any additional power added with the throttle will be absorbed in the brakes to maintain constant speed.
- Use rudder deflection and the minimum necessary inputs of differential braking to achieve directional control.

- Do not “ride the brakes”. Pilots should consciously remove pressure from the brakes while taxiing. Failure to do so results in excessive heat buildup, premature brake wear, and increased possibility of brake failure or fire.
- Avoid unnecessary high-speed taxiing. High-speed taxiing may result in excessive demands on the brakes, increased brake wear, and the possibility of brake failure or fire.
- Brakes have a large energy absorbing capacity; therefore, cooling time should be considered. Energy absorbed during a few seconds of deceleration can take up to an hour to dissipate. Always allow adequate cooling time after brake use.
- Allow a cooling period following a high-energy braking event. High-energy braking can include an aborted takeoff or the equivalent energy required for a Maximum Gross Weight full-stop from 70 knots in less than 1000 feet.

Brake Maintenance

The brake assemblies and linings should be checked at every oil change (50 hours) for general condition, evidence of overheating, and deterioration. *Serials 0002 thru 3450 before SB 2X-05-01:* At every annual/100-hour inspection the brakes should be disassembled, the brake linings should be checked and the O-rings must be replaced. Refer to Section 8, Handling, Servicing, and Maintenance for specific servicing information on the Brake System.