

Go-Arounds Pay More Than Landings



*Tim Baker (PIT)
Chairman, Training Committee*

“I’m sure all of us can tell our own war story about ‘interesting’ approaches we have been able to squeeze onto the runway without incident. The question hanging out there is: Why don’t we just hit the power and go around?”

In the last year or so, the Company and ALPA have mounted an effort to reduce the number of unstabilized approaches we see on the line. This effort has focused on raising awareness on what makes an approach unstabilized in the first place. The *Safety On Line* magazine has addressed this issue. The parameters for an unstabilized approach are found in Section 18 of your Pilot’s Operating Handbook. Take a minute and be sure you are familiar with the guidelines as they apply to your airplane. ALPA has joined in this effort by posting Flight Operations Quality Assurance data in Flight Ops at all crew bases highlighting airports and equipment types that have an increased number of unstabilized approaches. We have also made presentations to every new-hire class that has come on to the property and emphasized the recognition and reduction of unstabilized approaches. Believe me, this is an important topic. Why? While every unstabilized approach does not result in a landing overrun or an incident, nearly all landing overruns and incidents have resulted from unstabilized approaches.

Unfortunately, some recent incidents have shown that not all of you out there have gotten religion on unstabilized approaches. So as a means of showing you just how serious unstabilized approaches can be, let’s go over the sanitized highlights of one of these

unstabilized approaches and the repercussion that it has generated.

A flight was on a visual approach at the end of a long day. (By the way, unstabilized approaches almost always happen in good weather.) The crew wound up high and hot while on final. At 1,000 feet agl the airplane was doing about 200 KIAS. At 500 feet agl (the window for being stabilized on a visual approach), it was still doing 170 KIAS. By the time the airplane crossed the fence, it had only slowed to Vref + 40 (maximum for a stabilized approach is Vref + 20). Well, all of that extra energy had to go somewhere, and it did. It all went right to the brakes, which smoked up and flashed over while parking at the gate... not exactly the way to send the passengers home after a flight!

I’m sure all of us can tell our own war story about “interesting” approaches we have been able to squeeze onto the runway without incident. The question hanging out there is: Why don’t we just hit the power and go around? I’ve wondered about this myself. Could it be that we are all “company men” and are concerned about the hit our on-time performance would take from the 15 minutes it takes to go around? I talk to lots of pilots, and I don’t think that the “company man” theory holds much water. What I do think is at work is the pride we all take in the performance of our jobs. The most visible af-

firmation of our skills is our ability to make smooth approaches and nice landings. (When was the last time someone told you “nice take-off”?)

By doing a go-around, we are admitting defeat for that approach. And let’s face it, any pilot worth his salt absolutely hates to admit defeat! An “I can do it” attitude can lead you into continuing an unstabilized approach well past the “approach gates” that must be satisfied so that the approach may be continued. That kind of attitude can lead you into “smoking off” the brakes on landing or right to the front door of the 76 Station . . . oops, wrong airline.

Let me re-emphasize that the Company is on board with this emphasis on going around from unstabilized approaches. They will not, repeat NOT, whack you for going around from an unstabilized approach. In fact, they fully expect and are anticipating an increase in the number of go-arounds. So don’t be shy about pushing up the power and taking it around for another attempt. No one will gig you for exercising your judgement as a pilot to do just that.

Let me offer another reason for bailing out of approaches that get out of shape. On the flight that lit off the brakes, a member of the FAA was riding in the back, hitching a ride home. How long do you think it took for the “federale” to put on the inspector cap and start digging into what happened? And, as luck would have it, another FAA employee was in the control tower with a group of Cub Scouts on a tour. Never was the phrase, “Look kids, let’s all watch the airplane land!” uttered at a more inopportune time for our intrepid flight crew. So much for squeezing in an approach without anyone noticing it.

But the upshot for the Training Committee is that this crew was brought into the sim for training on proper approach performance. The FAA observed this training. Think about that. Do you want to come into the sim any more often than you have to? And the story doesn’t end there. The performance shown in the simulator was not up to standards. So the FAA called the pilot back into the sim to complete a 709 ride. “What’s a 709 ride?” you ask.

It’s absolutely the worst thing that can happen to you in a simulator. A 709 is the checkride for all of the marbles. It’s the check ride to end all check rides. It could also end your career. It’s the checkride where you have to demonstrate to the FAA whether or not you have the

skills required to keep the pilot certificates you currently hold. No pressure at all there.

All this because nobody in the cockpit said, “GO AROUND!”

So think about this the next time you find yourself high and hot on an approach. And trust me, it WILL happen! Is your pride in performance really worth the chance of a runway overrun? And ask yourself if you really do know who everybody is that is riding in the back of your airplane. Are you sure you can save this out-of-shape approach without anybody noticing? And ask yourself if you really do want to play “certificate roulette” in the simulator at the business end of a 709 checkride? And if all of that doesn’t convince you to take the airplane around from an unstabilized approach, maybe this will:

GO AROUNDS PAY MORE THAN LANDINGS!

New hire reports

Here’s some homework for our probationary pilot brothers and sisters. Find your contract and turn to Section 19(D)5. Read it closely. This paragraph says that ALL pilots will have the opportunity to “inspect, review, and initial the material or report.” “What’s the big deal?” you ask.

Are you certain that every Captain you have flown with has shared your high opinion of your flying skills and abilities? Or do you think that one or two of them may have seen a thing or two that you have done along the way that they didn’t like? I thought so.

So why the concern about 19(D)5? In a recent probationary pilot termination, the pilot was surprised to find out that his file contained derogatory probationary reports! And these reports played a role in this pilot’s dismissal.

I don’t mean to set off a wave of paranoia here, but I do think it is important to know what is being written about you. That goes for ALL of us. But for those of you still on probation, it is especially important to know what is in your file, so get out in front of it with a letter (written with the help of your local council representative), and get your side of the story on the record. Call your representative, schedule a visit to your Chief Pilot’s office, and get the straight scoop. Don’t wait until it’s too late!

And don’t wait too long between trips either. Lack of flying has played a role in several recent probationary checkride busts. Remember, the FOM says that probationary pilots are to fly TWO trips per month. If you are not, you

“Let me re-emphasize that the Company is on board with this emphasis on going around from unstabilized approaches. They will not, repeat NOT, whack you for going around from an unstabilized approach. In fact, they fully expect and are anticipating an increase in the number of go-arounds.”

“Lack of flying has played a role in several recent probationary checkride busts. Remember, the FOM says that probationary pilots are to fly TWO trips per month. If you are not, you are to call your Chief Pilot.”

are to call your Chief Pilot. Remember that. Crew Scheduling will not buy trips for you. Authorization must first come from the Chief Pilot’s office. So don’t be shy, pick up the phone and fly!

First Officer type ratings

The First Officer type-rating program is turning out to be a resounding success. Many of you who never would have been afforded the opportunity to earn a type rating are now validating your skills by passing the type-rating course. Congratulations! But remember that the type rating is not without requirements and unique challenges.

You MUST notify Pilot Records BEFORE starting class as to your desire to obtain a type. This is important since only the FAA or a qualified designated examiner check pilot may give type rating orals and check rides. It’s a manpower issue and it takes time to schedule

the appropriate people. If you don’t call, the type rating will be over for you before it starts. So check out the FOM for the proper procedures and make the call!

And remember that while the type rating checkride is the same as a Proficiency Check, it is graded differently. One substandard maneuver will render the entire ride a bust. And the Contract is clear that after a bust, the pilot will only be trained as a first officer (read—*sayonara* type rating!).

But have no fear! Step right up and sign up for your First Officer type!

See you in school!



YOUR UNION NEEDS



Here’s your opportunity to serve your fellow pilots as:

- **Negotiating Committee Member—**

The MEC is expecting to conduct an election at the MEC fourth quarter meeting in PIT, Nov. 13-17.

If you are interested in serving your fellow pilots on the Negotiating Committee, Contact MEC Secretary/Treasurer Philip Osterhus at the MEC office — One Thorn Run Center, Suite 400, Coraopolis, PA 15108 - FAX 1-412-264-1508