

USING THE “E” WORD

One of the recurring questions in the pilot lounge is whether to declare an emergency with ATC when “something bad” happens to the airplane or a system. Our answer? It’s a stupid question.

No one should hesitate to declare an emergency after a system failure affecting the flight’s likely outcome. While ATC can’t fly the airplane for you, controllers can find nearby airports and information on them for you, provide vectors, clear traffic out of the way and perform other support tasks. There usually won’t be any paperwork and the only real follow-up likely will be to make sure you made it back to terra firma okay.

