

Risk-Assessment Factors 101

Sometimes, assessing a planned flight's risk can be a daunting task, especially for inexperienced pilots. Grouping risk management concerns into specific operational areas can reduce them to bite-size chunks, helping make it all easier to digest. Here's an example:

AIRCRAFT/PILOT

- Fuel
- Calculated runway performance (departure and arrival)
- Time in type
- Recent flight experience
- Recent instrument experience
- Maintenance status/inoperative equipment

AIRPORTS

- Surrounding terrain
- Runway conditions
- Current and forecast ceiling
- Current and forecast visibility
- Winds (velocity and angle relative to runways)
- Temperature/dewpoint spread

EN ROUTE

- Weather forecast, including fronts and winds aloft
- Convective conditions, if any, and direction of movement
- Cloud cover
- Are adverse conditions widespread or localized?
- Special-use airspace—will it conflict with or complicate weather avoidance?

APPROACH

- Familiarity
- Currency
- Workload

