



When It All Goes Quiet

Audio failure, whether total or partial that hinders your ability to effectively communicate with ATC, should have you dialing 7600 on the transponder. That's the first order of business. From there, sorting it all out should have you thinking like a technician does when we tackle an audio repair on the ground. Whether you have a combined audio panel with integrated intercom or a stand-alone system, the drill is the same.

You'll want to try another headset (you do have a spare readily at hand, don't you?). As reliable as many of the newer ANR models have proven to be, failure that renders the audio inoperative isn't unheard of.

Maybe it's a stressed phone cord (reason to secure slack in the cords so they don't get caught in seat rails, cabin door jams, etc.), or failure of the microphone. My first troubleshooting task is swapping headsets. If that proves unsuccessful, it's time to focus on the audio jacks. As moronically simple as it may sound, many pilots don't think of trying another set of audio jacks when blind-sided with an audio problem in a high-workload situation. If a push-to-talk switch fails, you can always use the switch on the other yoke, if equipped. But understand you'll need to plug into the co-pilot jacks to utilize that mic audio input.

The other function that many pilots don't realize is that most integrated audio panels with an intercom eliminate a dedicated hand microphone jack. But that doesn't mean you can't still use one. Do carry a hand mic because you can still plug it into the pilot or co-pilot microphone jack to key up the com radios.

