

The Route

Both pilots in the scenario presented in this article's main text are flying similar airplanes between the same airports on the same day. But that's where the similarities end.

One elects to go direct and non-stop into worsening weather, meaning he'll have minimal fuel to divert or deal with an airborne equipment failure. He also pushes the envelope on scheduling and fatigue. His basic flight planning is depicted in the ForeFlight screen shot at top right.

Our other pilot elects to build in a fuel stop when flight planning, and picks one allowing him to maximize the winds around a low pressure system and find a slight tailwind. He also decides to forego a late night, arriving at the airport the next day rested and with plenty of time to make his commitment that evening. His basic flight plan is shown at bottom right.

Both pilots are flying airplanes with certain known maintenance deficiencies, both are instrument-rated and both have similar experience levels.

Both also have cut some corners, either in meeting their recent experience requirements or elsewhere. Which is safer?

