

CALLBACK

From NASA's Aviation Safety Reporting System



SELECTED ASRS REPORTS IN WHICH DISTRACTIONS WERE A FACTOR

To emphasize that cockpit distractions do not respect certain aircraft types, crews or operations, we pulled reports on a few events occurring between 2009 and early 2012 from NASA's Aviation Safety Reporting Service:

DIAMOND DA20

The CFI became enthusiastic about his instructing task and allowed the aircraft to run out of fuel so that he had to declare an emergency, then land at a nearby airport without damage or injury. The distraction of this aviator actually started before the flight, when the CFI's "excitement" at flying with this particular student—a helicopter instructor working on an add-on fixed-wing rating—prevented the CFI from checking the aircraft fuel supply.

CESSNA CITATION X

A fatigued captain reported responding to an EGPWS Terrain Warning at 2200 feet—when the flight should have been at 3000 feet—after cockpit distractions led him to mistakenly accepting a clearance meant for another aircraft.

BOEING 737

While flying an ILS approach on a heads-up display, the captain received a terrain alert and discovered the ILS frequency had somehow been changed and the aircraft was in a constant descent with zero in the altitude alert window.

TOWER CONTROLLER

Sometimes the distraction that causes the problem happens outside the aircraft, as in the case of a tower controller, distracted by something in the tower, clearing a Piper Seneca for takeoff but failing to mention the approaching business jet on two mile final to the same runway. The arriving jet's crew went around.

CESSNA T182RG

On his first flight in this aircraft type, the pilot learned handheld digital navigation tools can contribute to distraction after he flew into Class D airspace. He had set the autopilot for cruise at 2500 msl and started studying the various functions and data available on his iPad to learn how to use it for both VFR and IFR flight. He became so focused on the information available, he said, that he lost situational awareness and penetrated the Class D military airspace. He discovered the incursion from his panel-mounted navigator, not from the tablet, on which he had selected the IFR chart.

