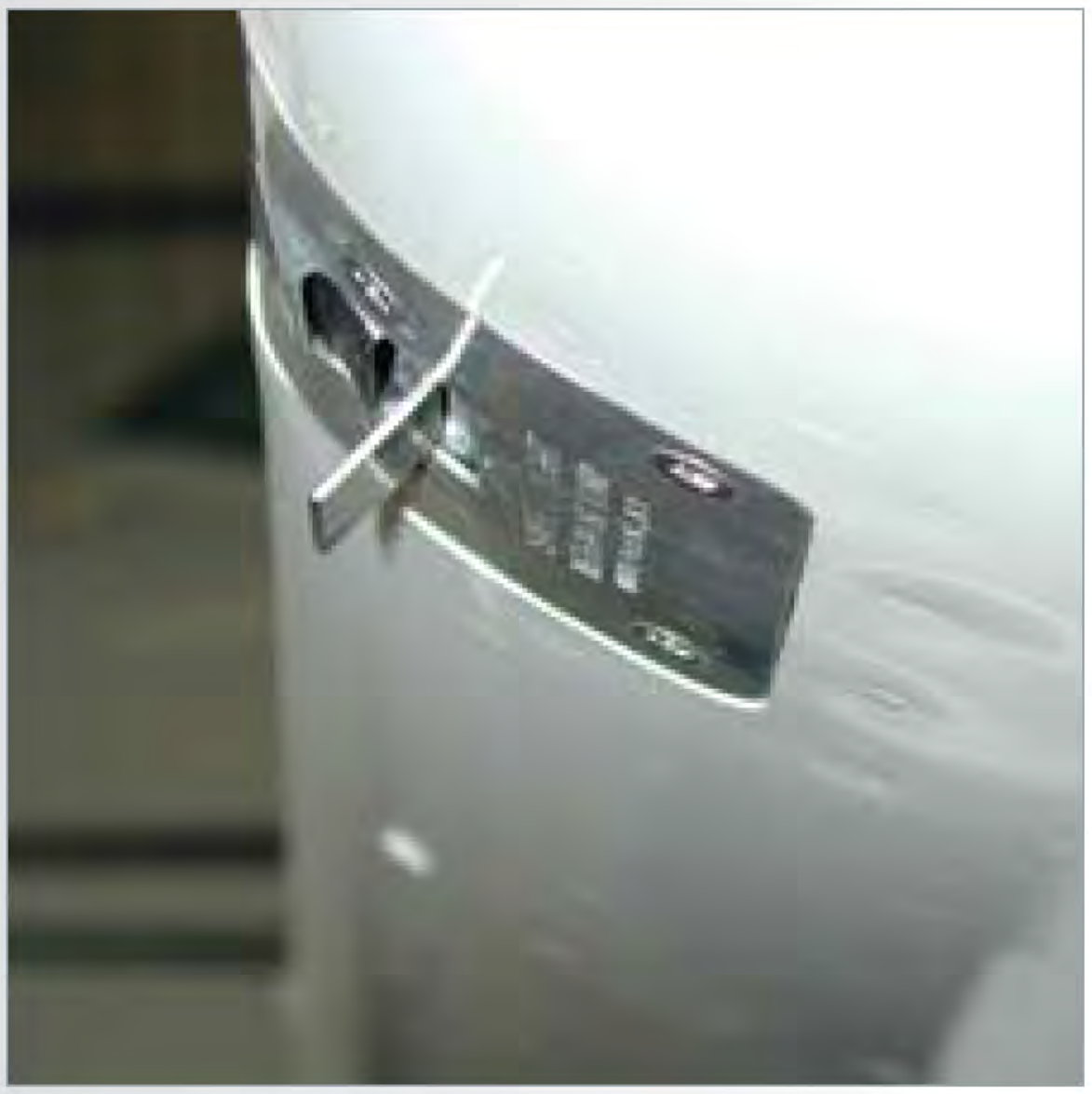
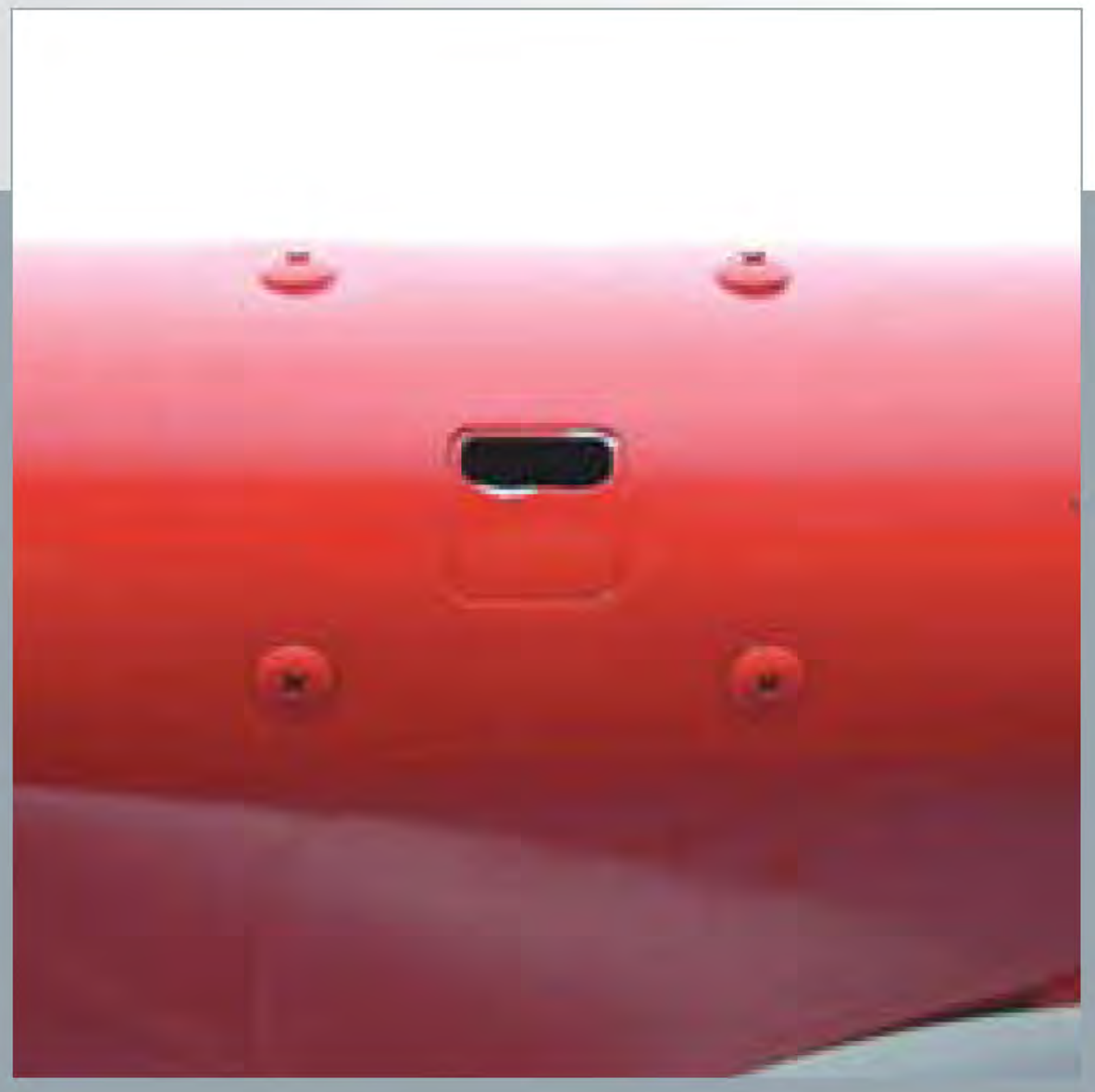
THE ZEN OF STALL RECOGNITION

Why do we practice stalls? Well, to learn how to recover from them. That's one answer, but the most-valuable lesson we learn from practicing stalls is how to recognize them when they occur, so we can prevent them. By the time we earn pilot certificate, we must recognize and understand the conditions and configurations conducive to stalls. Then, applying the necessary corrective action to avoid and/or recover from them should be second nature.



When recognizing stalls, all of our senses come into play:



- Our vision is probably the sense most useful in detecting a stall condition. We can use our vision to determine the airplane's attitude, its airspeed and various other parameters.
- Hearing also is helpful. The sound of air rushing past the cockpit likely will be reduced as the airplane approaches a stall. The sound of the engine driving a fixed-pitch prop also will change as it loses rpm.
- Another sense we use in perceiving stalls is kinesthesia, more popularly known as "that seat-of-the-pants" feeling. Basically, we're talking about how we perceive changes in direction or speed of motion. For the new student pilot, this sense is the most difficult to use. For the more experienced pilot, it should be fairly well developed.
- The sense of feel also helps us determine a stall's onset. For one thing, the controls start to feel "mushy" as the airplane slows; they lose their crispness and the airplane takes longer to respond to any control inputs made. At or near the stall break, large control input can be made—often must be made to maintain the desired attitude—before the airplane responds. Of course, the airplane itself likely will contribute some sensations, like buffeting and vibration.