

Abnormals

Any realistic training scenario will also include simulated emergencies or abnormal situations. Examples might include the landing gear's failure to come down at the FAF, alternator failure, a communications issue, a fuel tank's failure to feed the engine and, well, just about anything else that can go wrong in an airplane. Diabolical CFIs have been known to pull the landing gear breaker when the trainee isn't looking, for example.

That's certainly fair game in a pure training environment, but working on your IFR currency with a safety pilot may or may not qualify. This is another area where an extensive preflight briefing and understanding of each other's role is critical when flying with a safety pilot.

Some thoughts on things you and your safety pilot might agree for him to spring on you might include:

PLAYING ATC

When airspace, traffic and weather conditions allow, you may want your safety pilot to act like ATC by giving you "clearances" and vectors. It usually requires an experienced right-seater to pull this off, but if you know each other, it can be a piece of cake.

As with anything else associated with such a training flight, of course, you need to come to some agreement on the manner in which such a role will be filled.

SIMULATED FAILURES

Especially when it's your airplane, you may not want someone pulling a specific system's circuit breaker to simulate a failure. For others, anything might be fair game. Ideas might be, of course, the landing gear or flap systems, engine instrumentation, including an engine monitor, or selectively failing certain avionics—like the autopilot—and forcing the trainee to revert back to a simpler airplane.

GYRO FAILURES

Depending on the aircraft, it may or may not be a simple thing to simulate gyro failures and continue the flight using a partial panel. All-electric airplanes, which usually have a circuit breaker dedicated to each instrument, should be child's play. A conventional steam-gauge panel with vacuum gauges becomes more problematic without something to cover up the "failed" flight instruments. And a glass panel can be almost impossible to "fail" without appropriate-sized appliques mimicking the systems failure symbology.



Depending on what you agree to before takeoff, failing the autopilot, top, the air-data computer, the engine monitor or other aircraft systems can be fair game for the safety pilot.