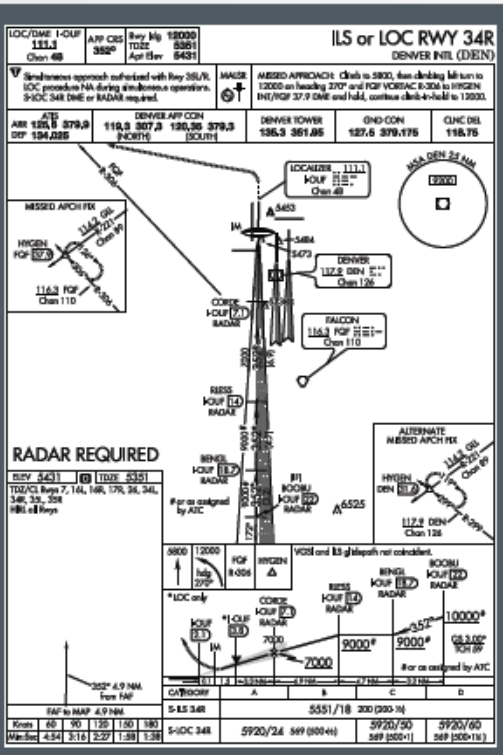
Setting Yourself Up

Making a safe diversion to a departure alternate airport requires organization. You need to have your departure alternate airport firmly in mind before takeoff, chosen before events require your decision to be carried out. This reduces your workload dramatically if events require a takeoff abort.

Because events happen fast on climbout, to reduce workload you'll want to do several things before taking off in IMC:

- **Admit the possibility exists you may have to land immediately. Denial is a strong force to overcome when faced with an aircraft abnormality or emergency. Consciously acknowledging you may have to abort the flight will help you combat denial if the situation actually arises.**
- **Know the airport and approach you'll use in the event of a climbout abort. Although it's best to conform with other traffic, in a true emergency you may need to fly something other than the approach currently in use to minimize your time aloft.**



- **Put the controlling agency's frequency in one of your communications radios. I like to use the active position of the #2, but you may prefer to use a standby, or "flip-flop" frequency position. The key is to have the frequency already dialed in somewhere where you can get to it without having to look it up.**
- **Similarly, have the navigation guidance for the approach you'll use available in a back-up radio position, so you can swap frequencies without having to refer to an approach chart.**
- **Nonetheless, have the chart for the approach you'll use readily available. Brief the approach as if you were planning to fly it at your destination, because you won't have much time to look it over if you need to make a hasty retreat to the ground.**
- **Brief your passengers on the need for a sterile cockpit during departure and initial climb. A sterile cockpit means no extraneous conversation or distractions that would prevent you from focusing all your attention on flying the airplane. If you have a pilot isolation switch in your airplane, this is the time to use it.**