

THERE'S ALWAYS SOMEONE WHO DIDN'T GET THE WORD

In my focus on doing the maneuver and getting it right, I was just happy the airport was empty so I wouldn't be bothering others by staying over the runway for such a prolonged time. I was so focused, I did get one thing seriously wrong: I forgot to consider how awful my practice must have looked to a tower controller who had only one thing to watch: my yellow Cub climbing and failing, climbing and failing, climbing and failing.

Tower: "Cub 455, is everything okay?"

Me: "All is well, just practicing engine-out maneuvers, Cub 455."

Tower: "Copy that, just concerned you were having a problem."

It was said with the calm intonation of a professional, but I later learned things in the tower cab were not as they sounded. The following week, an email went out from the tower manager to pilots, suggesting that anyone practicing emergency procedures in the pattern should be kind to the controllers and share their intentions. Apparently, while I was practicing loss-of-power simulations, it looked to them like I was experiencing the real deal. At each cycle when I pulled power and dove, the controller was reaching for the crash phone just as I flared and recovered.

My apologies to the tower controllers. I guess I wasn't the only one getting proper response training that day. It makes sense that engine-outs are just as awful to witness from the tower as they are from the cockpit. I had the benefit of knowing it was going to happen—they didn't.

