

TAKING A LOOK

There's really no magic to planning your Plan B: Just presume your Plan A won't work. What will you do? Perhaps as important, when will you do it?

The time-honored practice of taking a look at actual conditions then making a decision on whether to proceed might be a good way to think about your Plans A and B. Non-commercial operators in the U.S. can legally execute an approach even when observed weather is below minimums. The pilot experienced enough to know she can easily miss that approach also is experienced enough to know she'll need to divert if she can't get in. Having a Plan B means she already knows where to go next.

Likewise, anyone using the charts at right to plan a flight in the Midwestern U.S. should know the likelihood of icing decreases to the south. Any pilot planning to fly from the east coast to the west one may want to stay low.

Attempting to fly through northwestern New Mexico and northern Arizona, however, is where he must also contend with en route altitudes at or above the freezing level. Holing up in west Texas for the night might be a good Plan B.

Lowest freezing level (100s of feet MSL)

Analysis valid 1200 UTC Fri 03 Jan 2014

