



## Safety Brief #112 Important Pre-Flight items for 'Bug Season'

**Subject:** It is 'Bug Season', here are some important Pre-Flight reminders (for all aircraft types)

We all follow our checklists as written in the POH and certainly recognize the picture with the general flow (see below). It has been 'bug season' which makes Step #7 especially important and is discussed here.

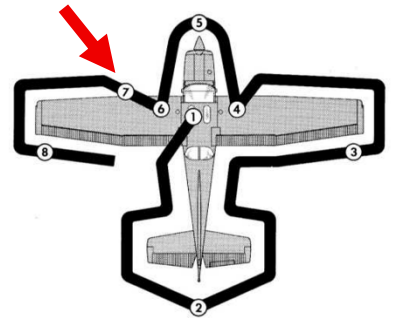
There are 3 important items located at Step #7 that point directly into the relative wind. These devices must be clear of all debris and obstructions. During Pre-Flight (especially during bug season), these 3 devices must be visually inspected carefully:

- **Pitot Tube:** The inlet as well as the drain hole
  - o An obstruction will: Decrease the accuracy and usability of the Airspeed indicator!
- **Fuel Tank Vent tube**
  - o An obstruction will: Prevent air from displacing the fuel as it is consumed which can lead to fuel starvation and engine stoppage.
- **Stall Warning Opening**
  - o An obstruction will: Decrease the accuracy and usability of the stall horn taking away a safety annunciator.

The typical POH associated with Step #7 is clear that inspection is mandatory:

### ⑦ LEFT WING Leading Edge

1. Pitot Tube Cover -- REMOVE and check opening for stoppage.
2. Fuel Tank Vent Opening -- CHECK for stoppage.
3. Stall Warning Opening -- CHECK for stoppage. To check the



Here are some important considerations during pre-flight:

- Do NOT blow into the Pitot Tube or Fuel Vent in an attempt to clear any obstruction. This will further lodge the debris, making the obstruction worse.
- Do not shove anything into the Pitot Tube or Fuel Vent or Stall Opening to clear the obstruction.
- If an obstruction cannot be cleared with simple/basic actions, contact maintenance.

**How do you know it is 'Bug Season'?**



**Real world examples of 'obstructions in the making' (Cessna 172 June 2025):**

- This ladybug had a bad day, fortunately not at the inlet of the Pitot Tube



**What does a Cessna Fuel Tank vent look like?**



**Note:** The pictures and POH references are associated with a Cessna 172 where the Pitot Tube, Fuel Tank Vent, and Stall Horn opening are located on the left wing. Other aircraft types and models may have different locations, be sure to locate them properly.

**Note:** Many aircraft types (e.g., Cessna) have fuel caps with one-way vents to allow air to enter. This does not take away the need to also pre-flight the external fuel vent as explained above.

**Note:** Here is an example of a fuel vent becoming blocked (on a Mooney). A Mud Dauber had started significant mud build up in less than 48 hours when parked outside...and how much dry mud was removed.



As always, feel free to contact any of our instructors for additional help or insight as needed.

(link to all Safety Briefings: <https://www.mattbeyer.com/safety/>)

(Thank you, Rowan S., for flying during bug season and the observations)

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