

Fire

- A FIND YOUR NEAREST EXIT.** The best thing you can do with a fire is to get as far away from it as you can and as quickly as possible.
- B SNUFF THE SOURCE.** You're not a firefighter and the insurance company owns the airplane. Putting out the flames matters if it buys you more time for Step A.
- C CLEAR THE AIR.** Smoke can obscure your vision and toxic fumes can render you incapacitated. Fresh air that doesn't fan the flames can help. So can just proceeding to "Evacuate" if you're on the ground.
- D EVACUATE.** Remember the part about the best thing you can do? Yeah, do that if you haven't done it already.

KEY SKILLS



Fly the airplane



Prioritize, don't multitask



Know when to slow down

SCENARIO 1

Fire During Startup

*You prime the Cessna 152 for what your southern California skin believes is a cold weather start, and then crank to no avail. You prime again and goose the throttle for good measure—only to get a **BANG**, plus the smell of fuel and something burning. Your passenger looks alarmed.*

A Find Your Nearest Exit

While it's certainly possible you could get this fire to extinguish from inside the airplane, consider three things before you do.

First is that in every other instance of an emergency we talk about not trying to save the airplane. Yet in the situation where you could simply open the door and jump out, the book answer is to try and save the plane. Seems like an odd choice.

Second is that of all the fires on startup found during research for this manual, exactly one went out with repeated cranking, and it's not clear that was from cranking or just that the fuel burned out without setting oil and other flammables on fire. Most fires on startup didn't go out even after multiple fire extinguishers were emptied into the engine compartment.

(See "What NTSB Reports Say About Fire" on page 44.)

Finally, many pilots don't even know they have an engine fire until flames are exiting the cowlings or Tower calls to ask if they need assistance with their smoking airplane (seriously). If you *know* you have an engine fire, you probably have a fire too big to deal with from inside the airplane.

That means your first move is popping open the door of the 152 and telling your passenger to do the same. If this was in an airplane with the only door on the passenger side, you'd tell the passenger to open it or get ready to reach across to pop it yourself.

Despite what the POH says, your PIC authority entitles you to exit any door now if you think that's best.