**Surviving my new Long EZ**

By Eric Cobb

Rules to live by:

Rule #1. Never leave the nose unattended when gear is extended. Because of the engine being in the rear this can leave the nose very light and the lightest breeze can tip your plane over. The aft end of your aircraft will contact the ground quiet hard. If you have a passenger it will give them a great view of the sky. Damage to the plane can be quit extensive. If the propeller is in a vertical position when this occurs it can do damage to the propeller with the possibility of bending the flange on the crankshaft. The aft bottom ends of the rudders will make contact with the ground and split, spinner and wheel pants will tweak and crack out of place, and if you have baggage pods, they can become damaged also. Beagle would add, don’t leave the manual gear part way down – it won’t take long for the gear teeth to weaken as you move it around – those are very weak gear teeth intended only for light air loads.

Rule #2. Double check the gear is all the way down and locked before getting into the Long EZ. Per plan with crank retract. I once cranked the nose wheel down when it hit the ground and stopped cranking. I thought it was all the way extended. Wrong. I was two gear teeth from being over center and as soon as I started to taxi, the gear ratcheted down stripping all the gears on the retract system. I installed a green light to tell me the gear is in the lock position. Easy to do. Contact me if you need a schematic.

Rule #3. Make sure you have an appropriate check list. Attach it in a visible place in the cockpit. Get in the habit of saying it out loud. This gives your passenger some assurance that you are doing what needs to be done and helps eliminate some fear on their part. Some other items I’ve added to my check list are:

1. “Canopy coming down, latched and locked.”
2. When half mile on short final get in the habit of saying, “Gear down and locked with one in the green.” Verify this to be true, don’t just say it. Be extra cautious on those long straight ins. If you do those. Never rely on the warning system to tell you to put the gear down - if you forget it will give you a great view of the runway.
3. One last item I’ve added to my check list is, just as I start to taxi after engine start is to “verify the breaks are working” by tapping left side and then the right.

Rule #4. Before closing the canopy after flying, double check magneto switch and master in off position. I actually touch or point to the switches to make sure before walking away from my plane.

These are the mistakes I see being made over and over. Ez drivers seem to have to make the mistakes on their own. If you have any rules that you live by forward them on to me. I’d like to add them to the list. Might keep someone flying and save them from an embarrassing moment or worse. ec-co@comcast.net