



Cessna 172N/P Preflight Inspection

Note: This page is intended to be a tutorial to assist the student in learning to preflight a Cessna 172 (N or P models). It is not a replacement for the check list for a specific airplane. It does not consider every model variant nor every modification to these airplanes. If the procedures here contradict those in the airplanes Pilot Operating Handbook (POH) or the Federal Aviation Regulations, be sure to follow the procedures in the POH or FARs.

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The flight hour meter, or commonly called the "Hobbs meter" measures the amount of time the engine ran. Since this is normally used for billing,

check the reading against the billing paperwork. It is customary to round up if the reading is between 2 numbers.



The time on the Tachometer, or "Tach Time" is what is used for maintenance." This is the number you check against the due times for things like a 100 hour inspection, airworthiness directives and other scheduled maintenance.

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CABIN



Aircraft Documents – CHECK. A-R-R-O-W

Airworthiness Certificate
Registration

Radio Station License - no longer required for flights in the U.S. unless you have some exotic equipment.

Operating Limitations

Weight and Balance information

Since the Airworthiness Certificate is required to be "displayed", it goes on top when replacing the documents in the clear window. The Pilot Operating Handbook (POH) is a required part of the airplane in airplanes built on or after March 1, 1979. This includes all "P" Models and many "N" Models.



Control Wheel Lock – REMOVE.



Ignition Switch – OFF.

Avionics Master Switch – OFF.

If your airplane is not equipped with an avionics master switch, turn off each



radio individually.

Master Switch – ON.



Fuel Quantity Indicators – CHECK QUANTITY. Note: Fuel gauges must not be used as the sole indicator of fuel quantity.



Flaps – DOWN.

Note: "N" Models have 40 degrees of flaps, "P" Models have 30 degrees.



Master Switch – OFF.



Baggage Door – CHECK.

EMPENNAGE



Rudder Gust Lock – REMOVE. (if installed)



Position Light – CHECK condition.

Anti-collision Beacon Light – CHECK condition.

VOR Antenna – CHECK condition.



Tail Tie-Down – DISCONNECT.

Check the rudder control cable ends and stop bolts for intact safety wire and general condition.



While you are here, look at the belly of the airplane from the tail. Any skin wrinkles and leaks need to be investigated.



Control Surfaces – CHECK freedom of movement and security.

RIGHT WING Trailing Edge



Flap – CHECK.

Check the condition of the flap and it's tracks.



Check that the Flap Control Rod is not binding and the locknut is present and tight



Aileron – CHECK freedom of movement and security.

Check that the Control Rod is not binding and the locknut is present and



tight

Check the Aileron Hinge Pins for security. These are commonly secured with a very small cotter key on one end, or by placing the extended end under the nut on one of the hinge attachment bolts.

WARNING: Do not put your fingers between the aileron and the wing unless you are securely holding the aileron with the other hand!



Aileron Counterweights – CHECK security.

RIGHT WING



Wing Tip – CHECK condition. Check the lenses of the position light and strobe. (if installed)



Wing Tie-Down – DISCONNECT.



Main Wheel Tire – CHECK for proper inflation.



Before first flight of the day and after each refueling, use sampler cup and drain small quantity of fuel from fuel tank sump drain.



Fuel Quantity – CHECK VISUALLY for desired level.

Fuel Filler Cap – SECURE.

NOSE



Engine Oil Level – CHECK.



Fuel Strainer – DRAIN about 4 seconds before first flight of the day and after refueling.



Propeller and Spinner – CHECK for nicks and security.



Alternator Belt – CHECK tension and condition.



Landing Light(s) – CHECK for condition



and cleanliness. Note: Some models have the landing/taxi light on the leading edge of the left wing

Carburetor Air Filter – Check for restrictions by dust or other foreign matter.

Nose Tie-Down – DISCONNECT.



Nose Wheel Tire – CHECK for proper inflation.

Nose Wheel Strut – CHECK extended approx. 2 inches.

Shimmy Damper – CHECK for leaks. (Note: some dampers do not contain fluid)



Static Source Opening (left side of fuselage) – Check for stoppage.

LEFT WING

Main Wheel Tire – CHECK for proper inflation. (same as right side)

Before first flight of the day and after each refueling, use sampler cup and drain small quantity of fuel from fuel tank sump drain. (same as right side)



Fuel Quantity – CHECK VISUALLY for



desired level.

Fuel Filler Cap – SECURE.

LEFT WING Leading Edge



Pitot Tube Cover – REMOVE and check opening for stoppage.



Fuel Tank Vent Opening – CHECK for stoppage.



Stall Warning Opening – CHECK

Wing Tie-Down – DISCONNECT. (same as right side)



Wing Tip – CHECK condition. Check the lenses of the position light and strobe. (if installed)

LEFT WING Trailing Edge

Aileron – CHECK freedom of movement and security (same procedure as the right aileron)

Flap – CHECK (same procedure as the right flap)

Books about the Cessna 172

[Cessna 172 \(A Pilot's Guide Series\)](#)
[T-41 Mescalero: The Military Cessna 172.](#)

Books about Cessna

[The Complete Guide to Cessna Aircraft \(2nd Edition\)](#)
[Cessna Warbirds: A Detailed and Personal History of Cessna's Involvement in the Armed Forces](#)
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[Cessna Aircraft \(Images of Aviation\)](#)
[The Complete Guide to Single-Engine Cessnas](#)
[The Legend of Cessna](#)
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