

## LANDING AND TAKE-OFF ON WET GRASS

### A Slippery Hazard

As we embrace the changing seasons and unusually intense rainfall conditions, it becomes imperative for us to be well-prepared and informed about the challenges associated with wet grass landings and take-offs.

*Grass Runways look Deceptively Smooth*



Landing on grass is typically a joy for both airplane and pilot. However, if that green grass is not rooted in firm soil, your touchdown might be a pain rather than a pleasure. It could throw up a muddy mess under your fuselage, or even send you for a ground loop. So it's best to know the condition of that sod before landing.

Call the airport manager, and ask for the current conditions. For instance, at our local grass airfield EHTX, if you call Ed or Mike after a good rain, they might advise to aim for a landing 200 meters away from the threshold.

Exercise caution, as some managers may be overly positive about the quality of their strips. Always check for Notams before flying to an airfield, since it is possible it might have recently shifted to a PPR status!

Before taking advantage of grass fields, we need to acknowledge that the takeoff and landing distances on grass will be significantly different than on hard surfaces. We can always expect a longer takeoff roll; while landing, and stopping distances will be appreciatively reduced by tall grass, rough surfaces, or uphill slopes. Conversely, a much greater stopping distance is needed after a heavy dew, frost, or rain, all of which can render aircraft brakes and steerable nose wheels virtually ineffective.

The Pilot's Operating Handbook figures are based on a dry grass runway and are therefore useless for calculating distances in other situations. EASA suggests increasing wet grass landing distances by 60%.

When planning a flight to a grass airfield review your soft-field operation techniques and, if unfamiliar, **seek guidance from your instructor**. Keep in mind that the usual touchdown zone may be muddy or marked by deep ruts from previous landings. You might be asked to touchdown at a different spot!. Always plan an alternate with an asphalt runway just in case.

*Protect  
the nose gear*



Remember, it's better to land on a runway where the only thing slippery is a good rain of compliments on your wise decision-making. Happy and safe landings, fellow aviators.

Questions or comments? Let us know your opinion.

Karina van Twisk  
FSO a.o. 01-01-24  
email: [FSO@aeroclubmaritime.com](mailto:FSO@aeroclubmaritime.com)