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Winter weather great for amateur pilots

by Lukas Voss

Wednesday, February 20th 2019



The Piper airplane used for training by P&N Flight and Charter is much smoother to fly during the winter because of the cold air.

MARION, Iowa -- If you have always wanted to learn how to fly, now might be the best time to do it. While snow on the ground impedes our commute and the cold isn't always fun to get around in, in the air it provides the ideal conditions for learning how to operate a small airplane.

"It's so smooth and the student can tell every move they make is having an effect on the airplane where as on a hot summer day with the turbulence they can't tell maybe what they did or what the turbulence did to the airplane," Cole Norton the owner of PP&N flight and charter said.

Anything below zero is off limits simply, because the aircraft engines can't work properly but in the air, there are no thermals meaning the air is steadily cold and dense, so the aircraft can perform a lot better. While Norton sees many students take advantage of the cold weather, many aren't coming out because they think the winter weather impedes with their flying.

"It's not so much that you can't go fly, it's people not scheduling. When in reality, this is the best time to fly and the airplane performs a lot better," Norton said.

While no problem in the air, airport officials have to make sure snow is cleared at all times. As soon as the snow stops, crews come out to clear taxi ways and the runways so airplanes can safely take off and land without having to worry about the snow on the ground. Marion airport is one of the busiest small municipal airports in Iowa and snow does pose challenges but it becomes even more important they stay cleared off and ready.

"It's very time consuming, it's very expensive," Norton said. "But it's extremely important that the airport is open at all times. You don't know if you are going to get traffic from out of state, it's just like a highway and open to anyone and everyone might use it at any time."

If you are interested in seeing the snowy corridor from the air or want to try your hand at flying yourself, you can find more information by [clicking here](#).

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