



Flying to Wittman Field for EAA AirVenture, for one week each year the busiest airport in the world? There's a lot to learn...and some things you can practice to make a safe arrival. Previously we reviewed the necessity of reading, and *knowing*, the AirVenture Notice to Aviators (NOTAM). Today we'll talk about more preparations for making your AirVenture arrival safe and fun.

### **Have a back-up**

Don't come to Oshkosh without a back-up plan in mind. I flew a Beech Baron to Oshkosh one year. Weather down-range slowed me up and my late-morning arrival turned into a mid-afternoon show time. I was lining up for the Fisk arrival when word went out that Wittman Field was closed for the afternoon airshow. All arrivals would have to go elsewhere until the field re-opened several hours later. Luckily I had reviewed the NOTAM procedure, contacted the temporary control tower at Fond du Lac, and entered the arrival stream to land and wait it out there.

Other situations that might cause you to divert:

- Weather (you *are* flying in the upper Midwest in the height of its thunderstorm season, and morning fog and low clouds are also common)
- Aircraft emergency (on the ground) that closes the field
- Parking saturation—some years Wittman Field fills up and non-show airplanes are turned away
- Any number of scenarios aboard your airplane that are better dealt with in less-traveled airspace

### **Fill 'er up**

There's a corollary to this lesson, which is **do not plan to arrive at Oshkosh with minimum fuel**. We all want to get there with as few stops as possible, and we all want to help the Oshkosh FBOs prosper during the event by buying their fuel. For safety's sake, though, I prefer flying to an airport within about one hour of Wittman Field and topping off the fuel tanks before flying the rest of the way in. You may have to divert, and you may have to hold for your turn to land. The last place you want to be declaring

a fuel emergency is in the traffic pattern with a couple dozen other airplanes, in full view of hundreds of thousands of pilots—and the FAA.

***FLYING LESSON:*** Arrive at AirVenture with plenty of fuel, and plans for an alternate if for any reason you can't land at Wittman Field.