



AEROSPACE / 

ASSURED PARTNERS AEROSPACE

5 Tips for Winter Airplane Storage

Change the oil. It may seem counter-intuitive to change the oil now rather than starting with new oil come spring but remember that the oil in your engine is old and contains dirt and contaminants that can cause rust and corrosion. Not only should you change the oil, but you should also replace it with a preservative oil mixture. Then take a quick flight with your new oil to make sure the oil is distributed throughout your engine.

Prepare your sparkplugs. Remove the sparkplugs and spray the holes with a preservative oil mixture. Then replace the original sparkplugs and they'll be set for winter. Another item to consider is the airplane battery. It probably won't hold the charge, at least enough of a charge, to start in the spring after sitting for a few months. Bringing the battery home and storing it out of a super-cold location is good. Or a trickle charger can be used every few weeks while it's in the airplane to maintain the charge and enhance battery life.

Guard against critters. Mice and other animals will seek refuge from the cold both in your hangar and in your airplane. Of course, no food of any kind that could provide enticement for pests should be left in your hangar or in your airplane. Plug all the holes. Use pitot tube covers and static vent covers, which will keep insects and dirt out that could later form a blockage. Plugging all holes will also prevent moisture that could get into your engine and cause corrosion.

Cover what you can. Your airplane's windows, canopy, prop blades, and tail should be covered. That will reduce damage to those surfaces and help reduce damage to the panel and upholstery caused by exposure to the sun and moisture from rain, ice, and snow.

Keep the fuel tanks full. Storing your airplane with full fuel tanks reduces the moisture that can condense in a partially full tank. If your airplane has a flexible, rubber fuel bladder, a full tank will also minimize cracking. And don't worry about the age of fuel. Most avgas is good up to a year.