

# Hey—Get out of my airplane!

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## The Correct Procedure

- Complete your full pre-flight check list
- Don't skip any of the locked door procedures on your checklist.
- Double check that your baggage (if any) is secured in the baggage compartment and that the baggage door is closed.
- **LOCK** the baggage door

## Baggage Doors—Unlocked ?

A few years ago, a customer who regularly flies with Ahart Aviation Services took his son up to an airport in the north bay (Santa Rosa or Petaluma) for fun and lunch. After going to lunch and coming back to their airplane, they were surprised by a criminal in the airplane demanding that they fly them to a safe area where they could escape from the law.



**Invites theft and the possibility of damage**



How did the criminal get into the airplane? The pilot had locked the airplane up, but did not go through their checklist 100% and lock the baggage door. The criminal was able to get into the airplane through the baggage door and wait for the pilot and their son to come back.

After realizing what was going on, the pilot did the correct thing: they squawked 7500 on their transponder and demanded that the unwanted passenger buckle their safety belts before takeoff. While the criminal was busy, the pilot and their son were able to get out of the airplane and escape. The criminal, stuck in

the airplane, was arrested not too long afterwards.

Another problem with leaving your aircraft's baggage door open or unlocked is the loss of personal property! If you are carrying baggage and the door opens during flight, you can well imagine what will probably happen.

Even worse than losing your property is the possibility that the items ejected from the baggage area could hit your airplane's horizontal stabilizer and/or elevator. This could cause the airplane to be damaged in such a way that the pilot could lose control of



**But, is it locked?**

the airplane and everyone on board could lose their lives.

You may say—"So What, I never carry baggage". Well, another problem could occur—the door could become damaged because of its movement during flight and a \$2,000 charge could end up in your account.

### The morale of the story?

During your pre-flight check and securing of the airplane, make sure the baggage door is closed and locked to avoid a whole host of possibilities.

