



ground, trees, or water before you endanger someone—including yourself—or someone's property.

As I have said before, there are roughly 1,000 things that can kill an airplane and I have 750 covered, but that doesn't mean that I am rolling over and letting it happen to me. Every time I crash or am present when a crash occurs, I try to do a thorough accident investigation (post mortem if you will) to find out what happened so I (we) can avoid recurrence.

I would say in my experience and observation, well more than 70% of all RC aircraft crashes are caused by the pilot, not the airplane or the radio failing. On the other hand, less than 50% of the crashes are acknowledged to be dumb thumbs (careful investigation shows that 43.2% of all statistics are made up ...LOL).

The first thing you have to do in your investigation is determine if it was you or not. You don't have to tell me or anyone else the truth but if you want to stop the next crash, be honest with yourself about this one. You can tell me you don't know what happened when you know you pulled when you should have pushed.

I may know the truth but I am not the one who has to stop your next crash—you are! So if you are the culprit, relive the incident and determine what exactly was going on and what you did to get into trouble or to make trouble worse. Once you figure out what you did, get on a simulator and try to recreate the same scenario and do it until you survive repeatedly. If you don't have a simulator, find a friend with one or go to the field and get to a safe altitude then go higher before you try to recreate.

Now if you have been honest and it really wasn't you, then gather all of the pieces you can and see what or who the real culprit is. You will want to inspect glue joints, wires, and connectors, switches, batteries, receivers etc.

If you can put it all together at the field and try it, other people will help you troubleshoot and think through it and it will be fresh on your mind. Careful, it might be too fresh, that is why I wear a neck strap with my radio. When I get mad I can't throw it as far ...LOL.

The last crash I helped investigate was a result of a previous crash that had not been completely repaired. In flight, the wing suffered a failure at an old fracture that had not been noticed or repaired. If anything was observed departing the aircraft before the crash, try to figure out what it was and locate it if you can. It may well be the cause and it would be good to inspect it to discover the reason for its failure.

Stay on the case until you know what happened or you just can't explain it. If you figure out what caused it, your number of covered items may go above my 750. If you share the information, everyone's number of covered items will improve. Fly safely and have fun!

I THOUGHT I SAW AN EYE DOCTOR ON AN ALASKAN ISLAND, BUT IT TURNED OUT TO BE AN OPTICAL ALEUTIAN

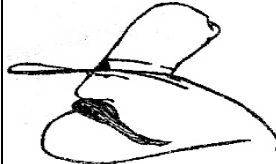
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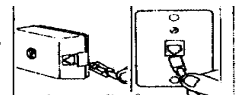
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