

Experience and “Comfort Level” Assessment Combined VFR & IFR				
Weather Condition		VFR	MVFR	IFR LIFR
Ceiling				
	Day	2,500		800
	Night	5,000		999
Visibility				
	Day	4 miles		1 mile
	Night	8 miles		3 miles

Figure 8-5. Experience and comfort level assessment for combined VFR and IFR.

experienced in the last 6–12 months—not necessarily the most challenging wind conditions you have managed to survive without bending an airplane. As shown in *Figure 8-6*, you can record these values for category and class, for specific make and model, or perhaps both.

In addition to winds, your “comfort level” inventory should also include factors related to aircraft performance. There are many variables, but start by completing the chart with reference to the aircraft and terrain most typical for the kind of flying you do most. [*Figure 8-7*] Remember that you want to establish a safety buffer, so be honest with yourself. If you have never operated to/from a runway shorter than 5,000 feet, the “shortest runway” box should say 5,000 feet. We will talk more about safe ways to extend personal minimums a bit later.

Step 4—Assemble and Evaluate

Now you have some useful numbers to use in establishing baseline personal minimums. Combining these numbers, the Baseline Personal Minimums chart in *Figure 8-8* shows how the whole picture might look.

Step 5—Adjust for Specific Conditions

Any flight you make involves almost infinite combinations of pilot skill, experience, condition, and proficiency; aircraft

Experience and “Comfort Level” Assessment Wind & Turbulence				
		SE	ME	Make/Model
Turbulence				
	Surface wind speed	10 knots	15 knots	
	Surface wind gusts	5 knots	8 knots	
	Crosswind component	7	7	

Figure 8-6. Experience and comfort level assessment for wind and turbulence.

Experience and “Comfort Level” Assessment Performance Factors			
		SE	ME Make/Model
Performance			
	Shortest runway	2,500	4,500
	Highest terrain	6,000	3,000
	Highest density altitude	3,000	3,000

Figure 8-7. Experience and comfort level assessment for performance factors.

equipment and performance; environmental conditions; and external influences. Both individually and in combination, these factors can compress the safety buffer provided by your baseline personal minimums. Consequently, you need a practical way to adjust your baseline personal minimums to accommodate specific conditions.

Note that the suggested adjustment factors are just that—a suggestion. If your flying experience is limited or if you do not fly very often, you might want to double these values. In addition, if your situation involves more than one special condition from the chart above, you will probably want to add the adjustment factor for each one. For example, suppose you are planning a night cross-country to an unfamiliar airport, departing after a full workday. If you decide to make this

Baseline Personal Minimums				
Weather Condition		VFR	MVFR	IFR LIFR
Ceiling				
	Day	2,500		800
	Night	5,000		999
Visibility				
	Day	4 miles		1 mile
	Night	8 miles		3 miles
		SE	ME	Make/Model
Turbulence				
	Surface wind speed	10 knots	15 knots	
	Surface wind gusts	5 knots	8 knots	
	Crosswind component	7	7	
		SE	ME	Make/Model
Performance				
	Shortest runway	2,500	4,500	
	Highest terrain	6,000	3,000	
	Highest density altitude	3,000	3,000	

Figure 8-8. Baseline personal minimums.