

Metro III AC

Version 1.2



Instruction Manual And Tutorial

StarvingPilot Simulations
March 20th, 2022

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Welcome!

Thank you for taking the time to download my Metro III AC for X-Plane! I put a tremendous amount of work into this model, and I hope that it shows. This is my second release for X-plane. Originally, I had intended it to have only marginal improvements over my previous release, the Dash 8-102. However, as the project wore on, I included several newer features than my previous release. The result is a model that offers a lot more than originally intended, including a virtual cockpit and cabin, several liveries, and a model that is much easier to paint.

For me, the Metroliner will eternally remain, “The One that Got Away...” for the fact that I have never flown a Metroliner as a pilot, nor flown on a Metroliner as a passenger. So, the flight dynamics may not be perfect. However, I’ve had the opportunity to interview a number of friends and colleagues that are former Metro pilots about the airplane’s quirks. Maybe I’ll get something right.

I’m beyond happy to reach the end of this journey and gift this airplane to the X-Plane community. It has been a project that has seen me through a tumultuous year, and has been a source of a little taste of sanity in an unpredictable world. On the other hand, the Metro III project has also had me banging my head on my desk and swearing at the computer at all hours of the night. It’s been quite the journey. Although I am sad to see it come to an end, I am ready to start working on my next project: a visual upgrade to the original Dash File. I hope that you have as much fun with this aircraft as I did.

Sincerely,
StarvingPilot

Installation:

Installation is Simple:

- 1) Unzip the “Metro III” File
- 2) Place both folders titled “Metro III AC Passenger” and “Metro III AC Freighter” into X-Plane11/Aircraft/Extra Aircraft
- 3) Start X-Plane, load either Metroliner file as you would for any other airplane.

Repaints:

Both Metroliner models include a bare white skin that can be repainted to whatever you would like. Please feel free to share these repaints as long as you give credit to the original Metroliner model.

For the fuselage, a file titled *metro3.xcf* is located in the base zip folder. This format is used by GIMP and allows very quick retexturing of the fuselage only. For Metroliner repaints that use painted metal instead of the standard bare metal, it's better to modify the actual .png files used for textures in the /objects folders.

Cockpit:

The Metroliner cockpit models an early-1980s AC model with the modification for increased payload. The interior is the older model interior that is more like a Metro II than the interior released later in the decade for the Metro III.

I chose the AC model for one reason: a Typo... Actually, two typos. First, the original model was a Metro III CC until I accidentally typed AC on the aircraft menu. Second, I didn't originally plan on a 3D cockpit. When I came to the realization that the Metroliner needed a 3D cockpit, I improvised the gauges without measuring or planning. Whoops! Anyways, with less room on the FO's side for the primary instruments, I decided to make things interesting by having less-sophisticated gauges on the FO side, which was often seen in the Metro AC model. Serendipity!

Because the cockpit on the Metro III AC is dissimilar on both sides, that means that anyone flying the Metro will be pleasantly surprised to find an X-Plane model that allows for several varied levels of challenge depending on which seat and levels of automation that one chooses to use for their flight.

Unofficially, the levels of difficulty are:

1 (Very Easy):

-CA Side with Autopilot On

2 (Easy)

-FO Side with Autopilot On

3 (Medium)

-CA Side with Flight Director Only

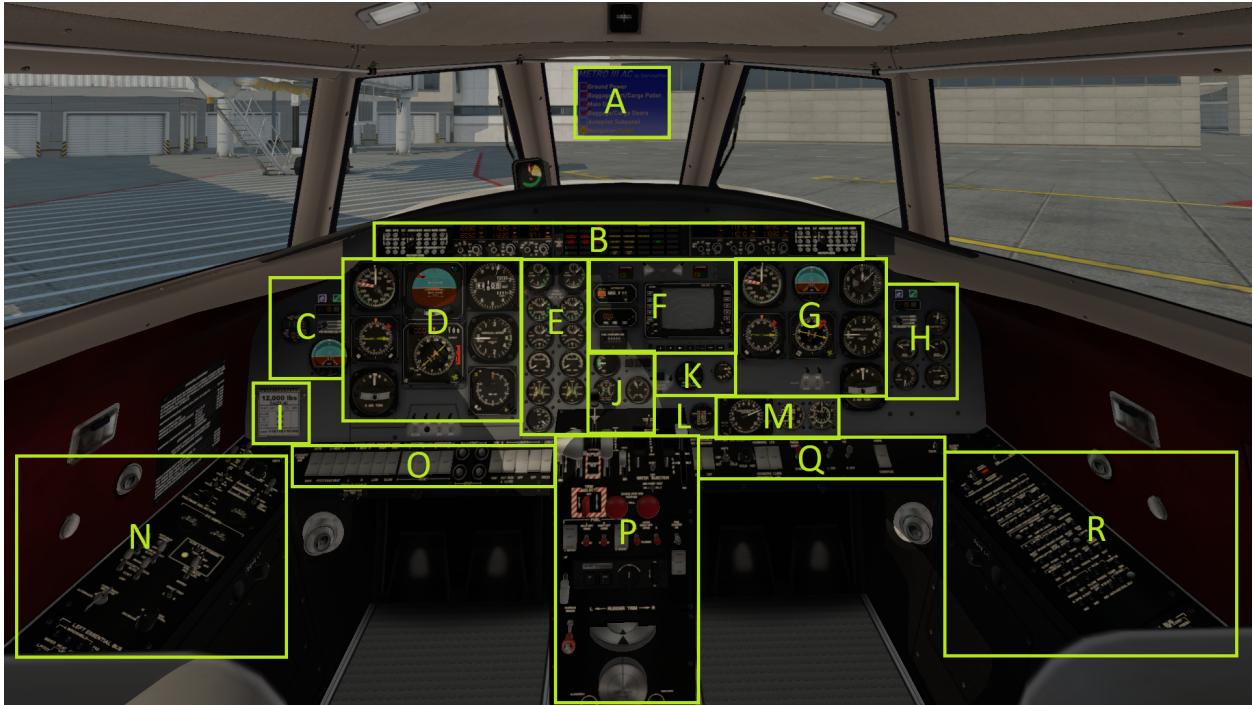
4 (Hard)

-CA Side with Autopilot/FD Off

5 (Very Hard)

-FO Side with AP Off (No FD Avail)

Cockpit (Overview):



A- Aircraft Menu

B- Glareshield

C- Pilot's Aux Gauges

D- Pilot's Primary Gauges

E- Engine Main Gauges

F- Other Avionics

G- Copilot's Primary Gauges

H- Copilot's Aux Gauges

I- Speed Card

J- Trim Indicator, Fuel Gauge

K- Landing Gear and Flap Indicator

L- Battery Temperature

M- Pressurization

N- Left Lateral Panel

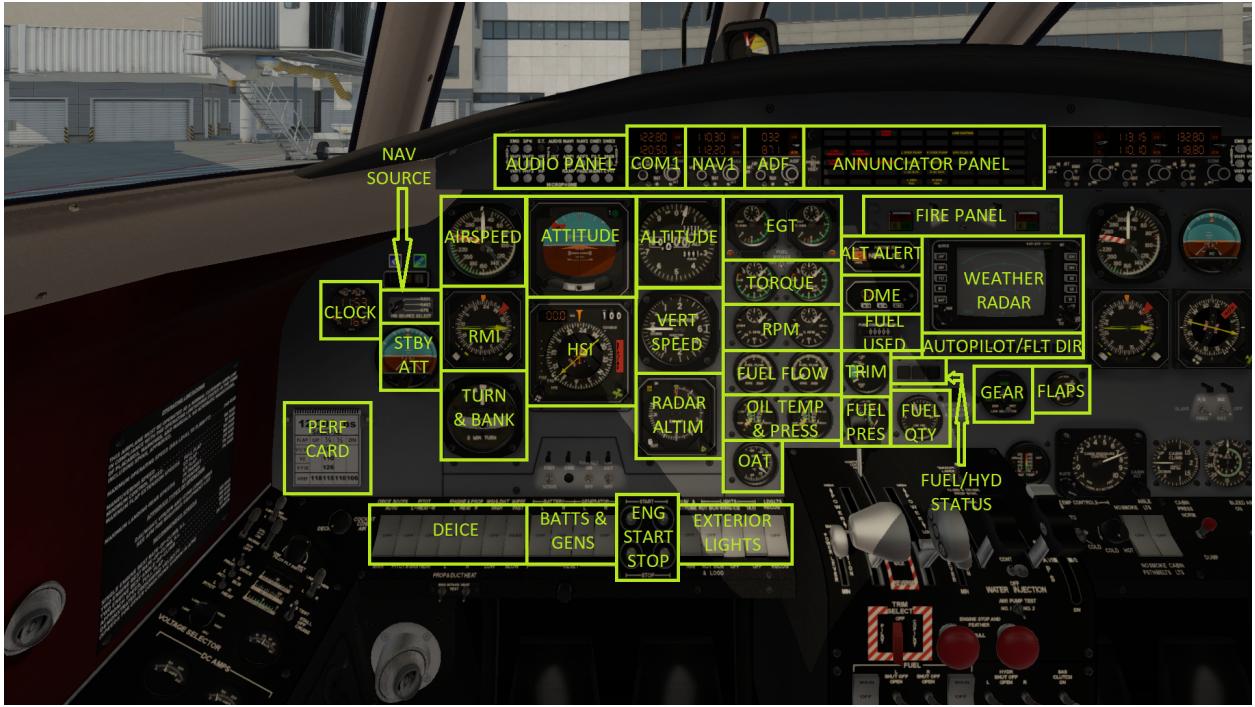
O- Electric/Deice

P- Pedestal

Q- Air Cond/Pressurization

R- Right Lateral Panel

Cockpit (Pilot's Side):



The pilot's side of the Metroliner is relatively straightforward. In fact, the Metroliner is certified for single-pilot operations under some types of operation. In addition, this Metroliner Model has been simplified so that users from first-timers to old pros will find this model enjoyable and reasonably challenging.

SRL and SAS are perpetually on in this model and are not simulated, while the autostart sequence has been simulated. This makes the start sequence a little easier. Just hold down the Start button at the bottom-center of the Pilot's panel. After about 20 seconds, the respective engine should be started and ready to operate. Repeat this action for the opposite button, lower the flaps to ¼, and you're ready for takeoff.

Where's the GPS?:

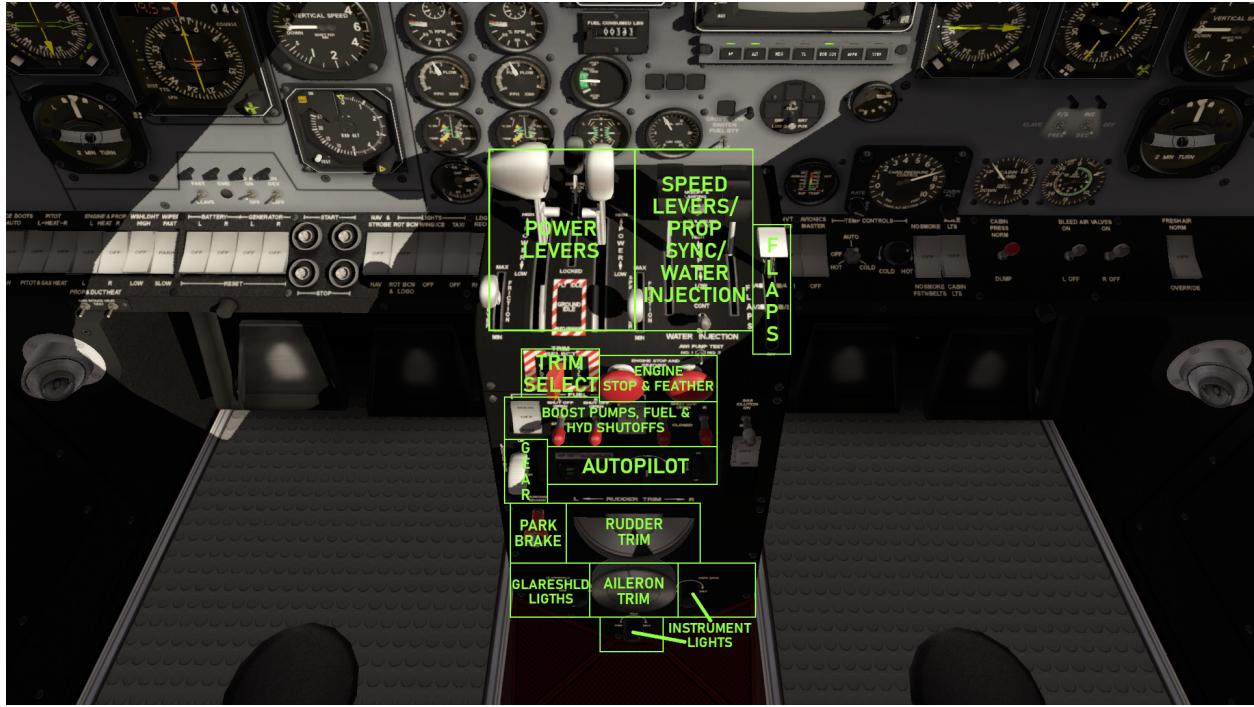
For simulation of modern procedures, a GPS has been included in the Metroliner. Under default settings, the GPS is hidden. However, selecting the Navigation option on the aircraft Menu to "Radio/GPS" will replace the Com 1, Nav 1, and ADF radios with a Garmin 430-style GPS. Selecting this option again hides the GPS. A popup window for the GPS may be opened by clicking on the GPS screen.

Cockpit (Copilot's Side):



The copilot's side of the cockpit is a little simpler than the captain's side. However, the main instruments for the copilot are *less* sophisticated than the captain. This makes the right seat a little bit more of a challenge to fly in.

Cockpit (Pedestal):



There's a LOT going on on the pedestal on the Metroliner. But, everything here can be found on any other airplane. The levers here control engine power and propeller speed. Underneath the speed lever are Water Injection controls, as well as propeller sync. Flaps are off to the side.

As you head downwards, you will find the trim select, engine/fuel/hyd shutoffs, autopilot, landing gear, parking brake, aileron/rudder trims, and controls for the glareshield lights and instrument lights (Dome lights for the cockpit are both located just below the lateral panels).

Shortcuts:

The metroliner has quite a few shortcuts that should make it a bit easier to fly. These are included not because I want to reduce the challenge of flying, but because I want flying the Metroliner to be a pleasant flying experience. For example, in the real world, we don't move our head around awkwardly to toggle a switch. We can either see it in our peripheral vision, or we just know where it is. To look away from our instruments too long can lead to a dangerous situation. For that reason, I've included shortcuts all throughout the airplane model.

Menu: Menus are accessed on both Captain and Copilot panels on the upper outboard corner. Click on the blue button.

Autopilot Subpanel: There's an option in the menu that places the autopilot on the glareshield. This makes setting the autopilot and keeping your eyes out the window even easier!

Captain/Copilot View: To quickly switch between Captain and Copilot (First Officer) views, press the blue button next to the menu that says either CA or FO. It will rapidly mode your camera to the opposite seat.

Hide Yoke: To hide the yoke, click the base of each yoke to make them appear and disappear.

Go-Around: Go-around is actuated by pressing the green light on the upper-right corner of the Attitude Indicator.

Lights: The knobs on the lateral panels and the bottom of the pedestal control all instrument lights. One of the pedestal lights controls the glareshield. Dome lights are controlled just below the lateral panels near the forward air vents.

Crossflow: Fuel Crossflow is controlled with two knobs at the bottom of each pilot switch panel. Click the knob on the right to transfer fuel to the right. The left knob sends fuel to the left tank.

Boxes/Suitcases: Boxes and suitcases are toggled with the Baggage Cart Option in the Menu. One option toggles the cart/pallets. The other loads those boxes or bags into the airplane.

Trim/AP Select: Trim and Autopilot select can be done with either the Autopilot or the Trim Select control on the pedestal. Selecting one or the other changes the source for trim and the source for the autopilot.

Engine Stop and Feather: Engine stop and feather also cuts off fuel at the firewall for the engines.

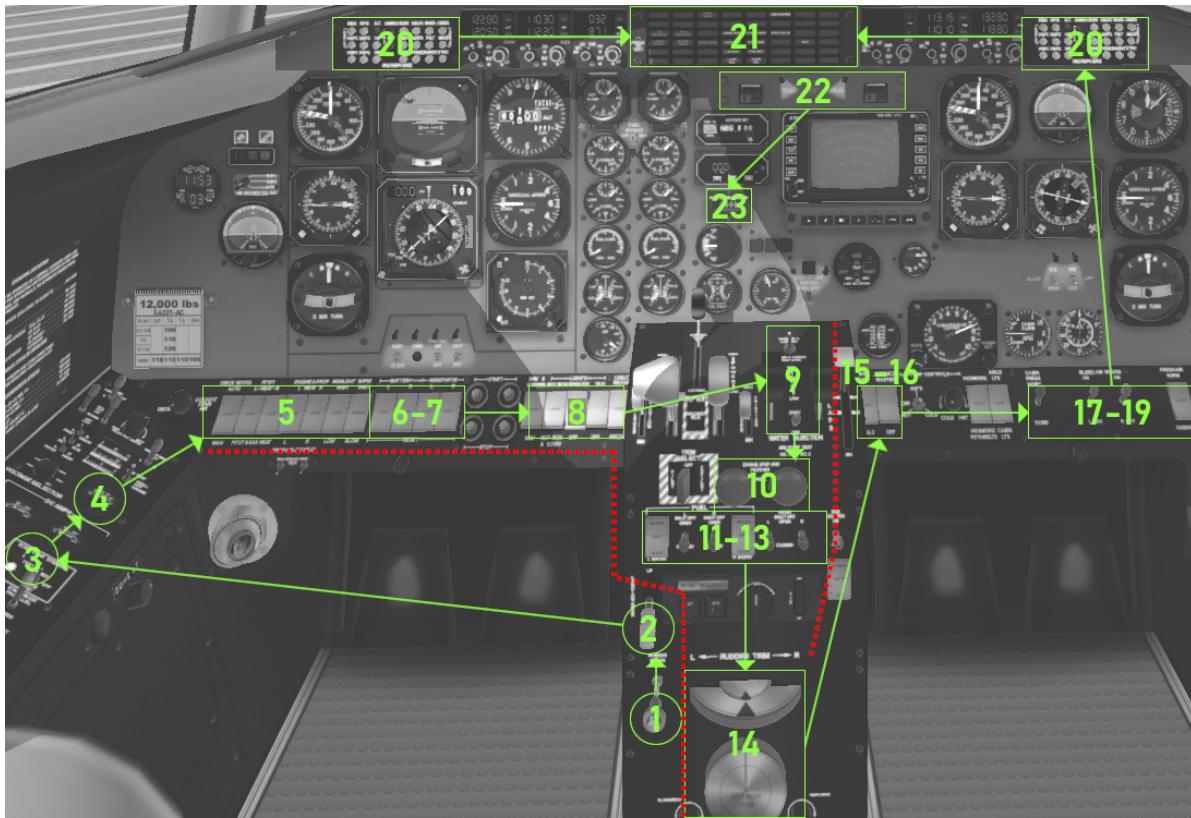
Flows and Checklists:

Any user can get the Metroliner off the ground with little effort. Just hold down the start buttons until each engine lights off. The Metroliner start in real life was an automated process, and you'll find that modeled on this Metroliner, as well.

Flows are intended for the advanced user. They emulate what professional pilots do in real life: *flow, and checklist*. Instead of just reading each item off a checklist, we perform the changes required for each phase of flight, then verify with the checklist that we performed that action. A flow and a checklist may have different items from one another. That's normal. The checklist is there to make sure that items that can result in a dangerous situation aren't missed.

If these flows seem like a little too much, don't worry about memorizing them. Instead, feel free to read through this section so you can understand the sequences that are involved in running the Metroliner. Most importantly, have fun!

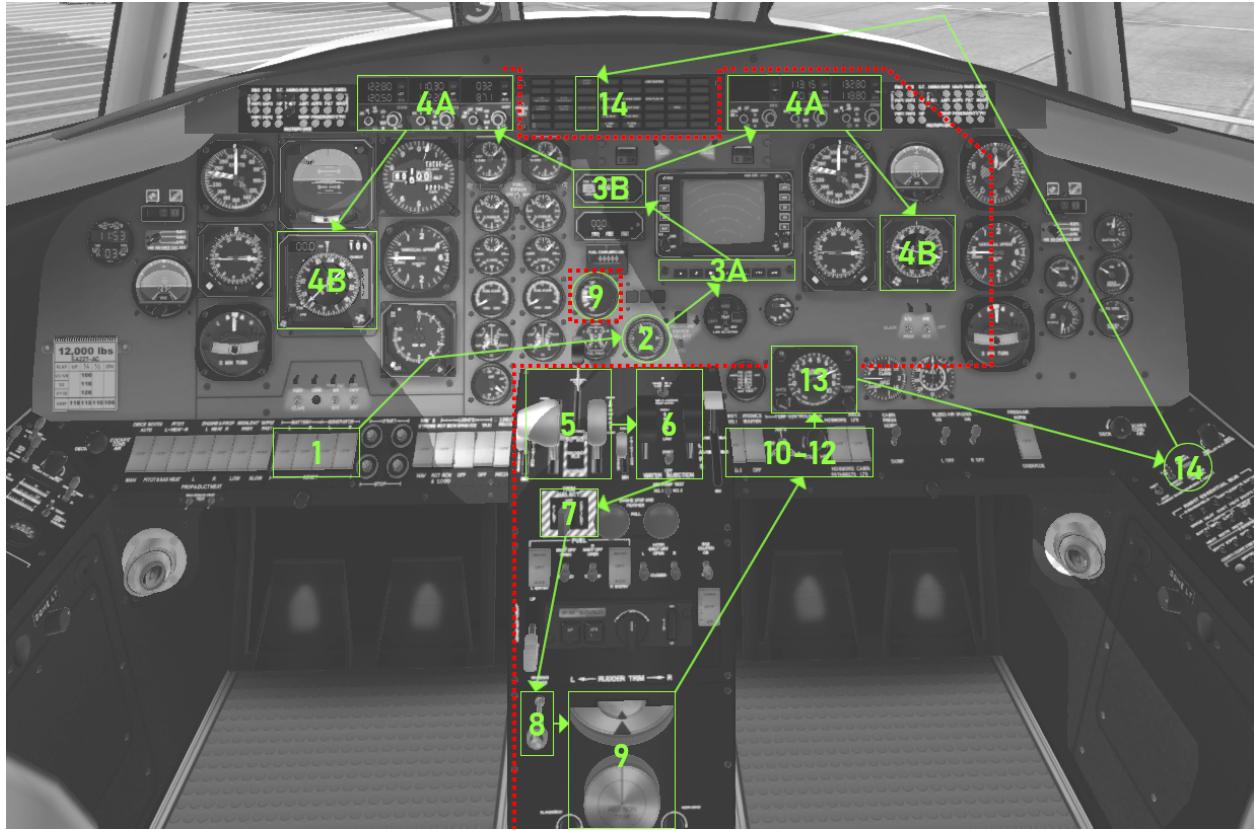
Flow #1 (Originating Flow):



The Originating Flow, done only once when entering a new airplane, verifies the airplane is set to its default settings and has been left in the proper configuration. This flow is vastly simplified from the real-world Metroliner, but it still looks complex. Start with the Parking Brake and sweep your hand up and over to the steering, then across the switches, back down the pedestal, then up to the other switches, then the glareshield and reset the fuel. Verify with the checklist. After that, you're done!

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 1- Parking Brake - On | 12- Fuel Shutoff - Open |
| 2- Gear Handle - Down | 13- Hyd Shutoff - Open |
| 3- Steering - Off | 14- Trims (Elev, Rud, Ail) - Set |
| 4- L/R Battery Voltage - Check | 15- Inverters - Off |
| 5- Ice Protection - All Off | 16- Avionics - On |
| 6- Batteries - On (Off if Ground Power Used) | 17- Dump Valve - Norm |
| 7- Generators - Off | 18- Bleed Air (Both) - Off |
| 8- Nav Lights - On (Nav & Logo on for Night) | 19- Fresh Air - Norm |
| 9- Prop Sync & AWI - Takeoff, Off | 20- Audio Panel - Set |
| 10- Engine Stop and Feather - Both In | 21- Annunciator Panel - Test |
| 11- Fuel Boost Pumps - Off | 22- Fire Panel - Test |
| | 22a- Radar - Off |
| | 23- Fuel Totalizer - Reset |
| | 24- Originating Checklist - Accomplish |

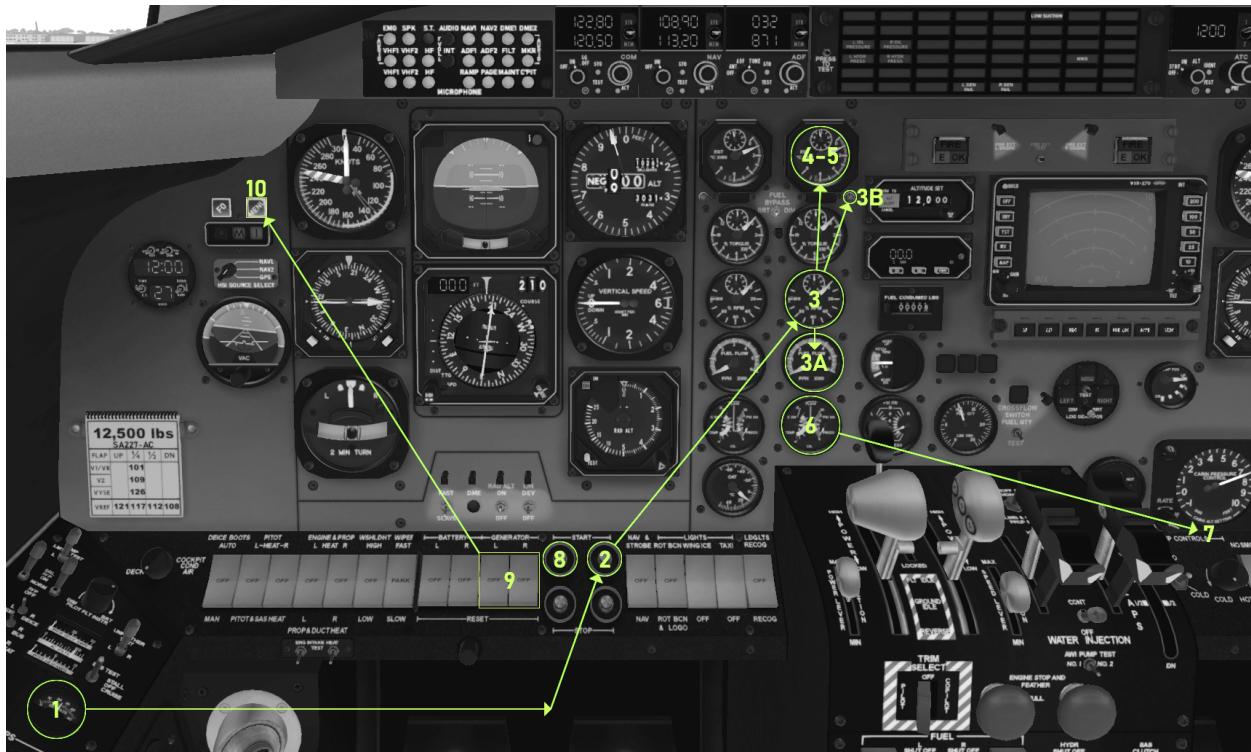
Flow #2 (Before-Start Flow):



The Before-Start flow is done before every single flight. It ensures that all the radios, lights, navigation gauges, and systems are set for an immediate start. It also involves a briefing of the departure and any potential safety threats that may exist. This flow can be very complex, but it makes the departure seamless and allows the crew to easily manage any nonstandard issues that may confront the crew on departure, should they arise.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 1- Batteries - On | 8- Parking Brake - Set |
| 1a- Beacon, Wing Insp On | 9- Trims - All 3 Set |
| 2- Fuel Quantity - Verify | 10- Inverter - No. 1 |
| 3- Flight Dir & Alt Alert - Set | 11- Cabin Temperature - Set |
| 4- Radios, Altimeters, and HSIs - Set | 12- Seatbelt & No Smoking - On |
| 5- Speed Levers - Flt Idle | 13- Pressurization - Field Altitude +500 |
| 6- Prop RPM - Low | 14- All Doors - Closed |
| 7- Trim Select - Set Pilot/Copilot | 15- Before Start Checklist - Accomplish |

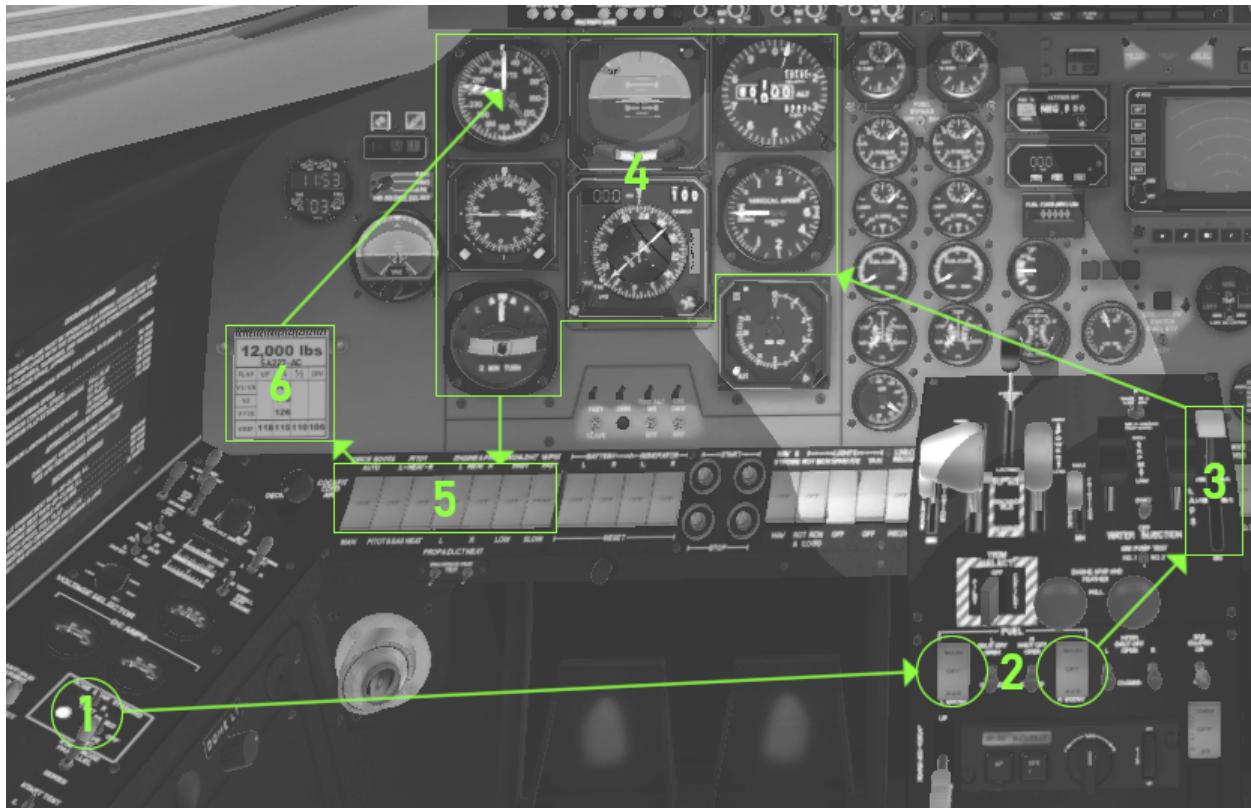
Flow #3 (Start Procedure):



Starting a turboprop engine isn't too difficult, but a little inattention can cause a lot of damage in a very short time. The start sequence for the Garrett TPE-331 engines on the Metroliner is automatic, but even home simulator pilots need to keep a careful eye on the engine gauges during the start process. If the start just isn't happening, or the EGT exceeds limits, or things just don't seem to be going right, abort the engine start by releasing the START button and pressing down the STOP button located below.

- 1- Battery Voltage - Check*
 - *21v Ground Power Start
 - *23.5v Battery Start
- 2- #2 Start Button - Press and Hold
- 3- 10% RPM - Ignition Light Lit, Fuel Flow Rising at 20% RPM
- 4- EGT - If Rising, Release Start Button
- 5- EGT Max Temp - No More than 770C
- 6- Oil Pressure - In Green
- 7- Bleed Air - Right Bleed On
- 8- Start Engine #1 - Same Steps as #2, Then Both Bleeds On
- 9- Generators - Both On
- 10- Ground Power - If Connected, Off

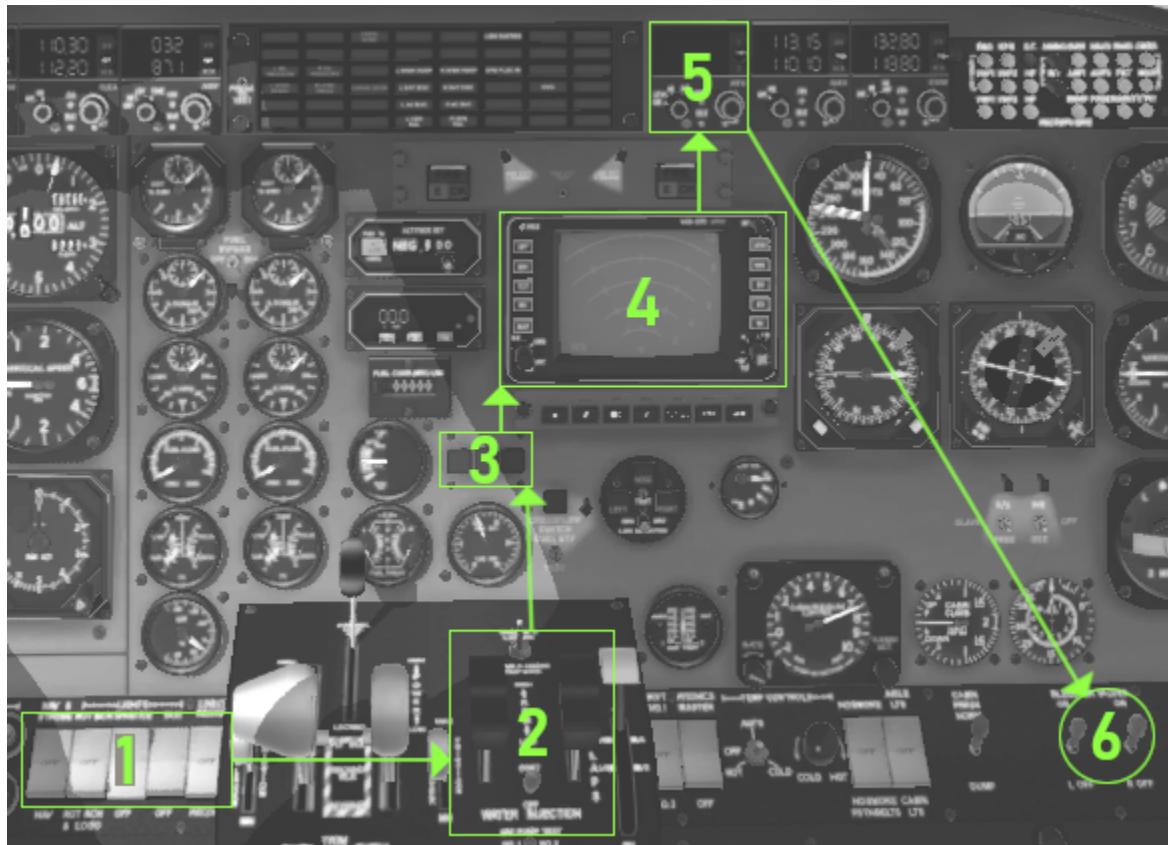
Flow #4 (After-Start Flow):



After-start is an important flow that gets the airplane ready for a safe takeoff, regardless of the conditions present. Besides the steering, every other system activated and checked in this step is a critical safety system. Make sure that this flow is accomplished perfectly.

- 1- Steering - Armed
- 2- Boost Pumps - On
- 3- Flaps - Set tp 1/4
- 4- Flight Instruments - Check*
 - *Airspeed - Indicates 0
 - Attitude Indicator - Level
 - Altimeter - Baro Set, Alt Reads within 75' of field elevation
 - Vertical Speed - 0
 - HSI - Heading Matches Compass
 - RMI - Heading Matches Compass
 - Turn & Bank Indicator - Level
- 5- Ice Protection - Set for Conditions*
 - *(ON) Icing 1,000 Feet AGL or Above:
 - L/R Pitot Heat On
 - Windshield Heat High
 - *(ALL ON) Icing Less than 1,000 Feet AGL:
 - L/R Pitot & SAS Heat On
 - L/R Prop and Duct Heat On
 - Windshield Heat High
 - (AGL: Above Ground-Level... Essentially what the Radar Altimeter Reads)
- 6- V1/VR Speed - Set for flaps 1/4 speed and adjust Airspeed Bug to that speed
- 7- After-Start Checklist - Accomplish

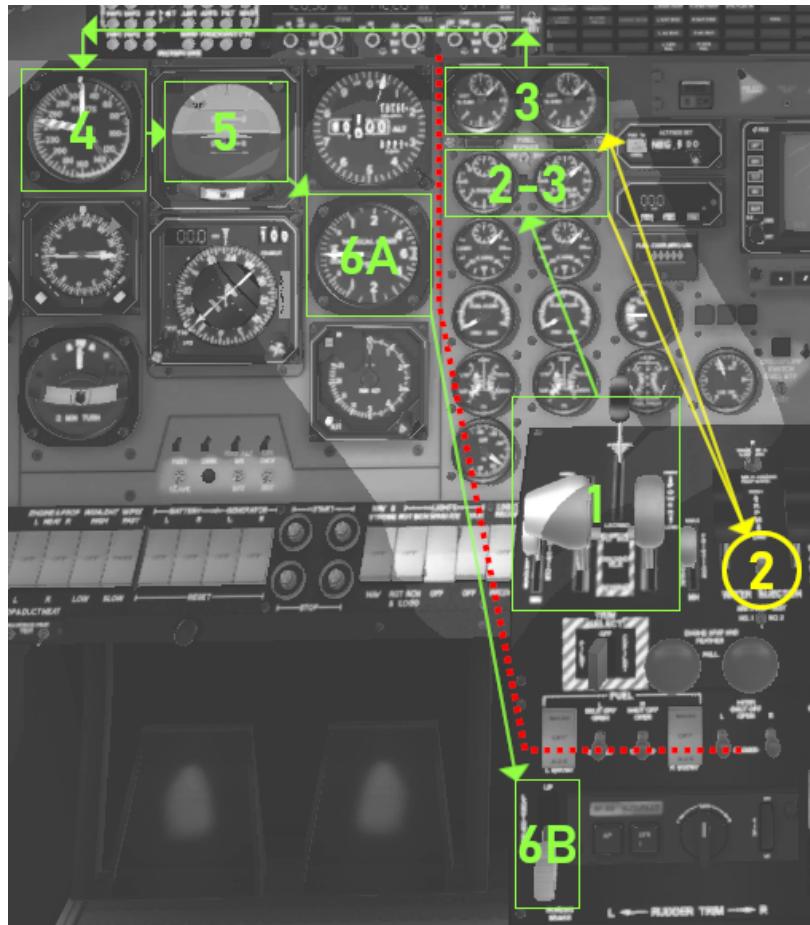
Flow #5 (Before-Takeoff Flow):



Normally, the Before-Takeoff Flow is accomplished while taxiing to the runway on a straight portion of taxiway. The real-world Matroliner has a number of tests that need to be accomplished during this phase of the flight. However, since this is X-Plane, and since modeling these tests would get tedious fast, the flow has been simplified to a quick reconfiguration of the airplane that takes place as soon as you receive takeoff clearance from the tower.

- 1- External Lights - All On
- 2- Speed Levers - High
- 3- Fuel X-Flow - Annunciator Off
- 4- Radar - On (if convective activity exists)
- 5- Transponder - On Alt
- 6- Bleeds - Both Off
- 7- Before Takeoff Checklist - Accomplish

Flow #6 (Takeoff Procedure):



Takeoff looks complicated, but it's not that different from what most flight sim users would do: just throttle up and go. We're essentially doing that, but we're moving the power levers a little slower, keeping a good eye on our instruments, and... if need be... adding a little extra boost with water injection! This procedure is divided into two parts: setting the engines, then flying the plane.

BRAKES - Hold

1- Power Levers - Advance*

Dry Takeoff - 25% Torque

Wet Takeoff - 35% Torque

2- Verify Torque at 35 % and Activate
Water Injection If Performing Wet
Takeoff

BRAKES - Release

3- Power Setting - (Whichever First)

Torque - 100%(Dry)/110%(Wet)

-or-

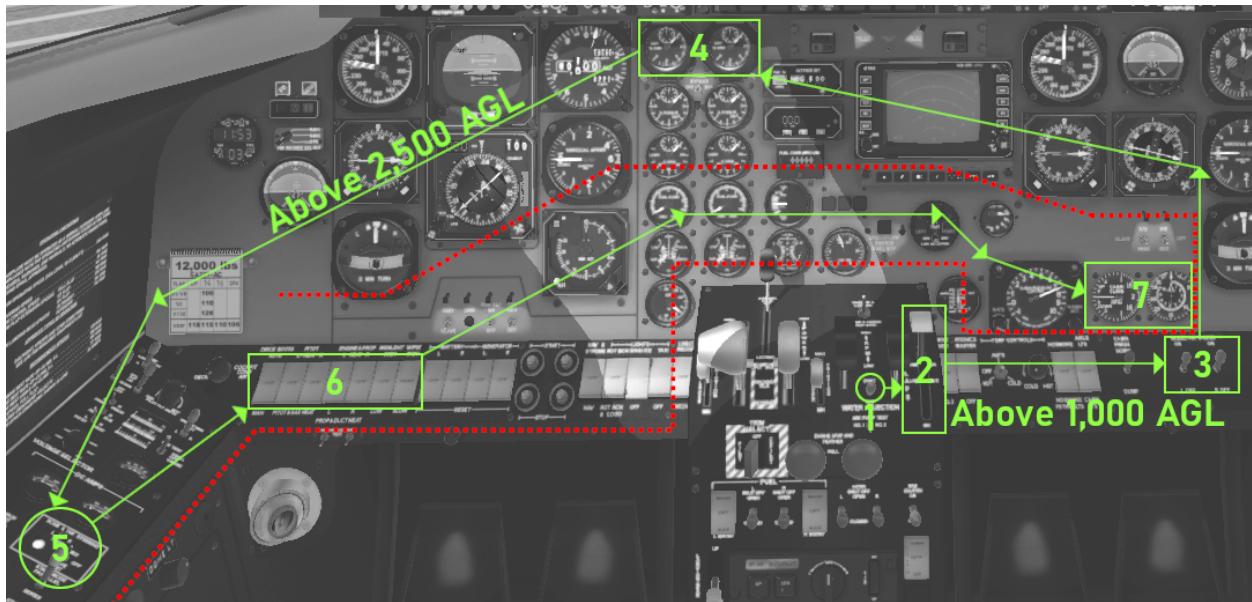
EGT - 650 Degrees C

4- Airspeed - Reaches R1/Vr Bug

5- Pitch - 10 Degrees Nose Up

6- Gear Up when VSI Indicates Climb

Flow #7 (After-Takeoff Flow):



Inflight flows are a little less complicated, and that's a necessity. You've got two jobs to do now: Managing AND flying the airplane! The After Takeoff Flow is split into two parts. The first part is performed after climbing past 1,000 Feet AGL and configures the most critical safety systems of the airplane for climbing up to cruise altitude. The second part, after passing 2,500 Feet AGL, is where the less-important systems are configured.

Passing 1,000 Feet AGL

- 1- Water Injection - Off
- 2- Flaps - Up
- 3- Bleeds - On
- 4- Power - Adjust Until EGT is at 630 Degrees C

Passing 2,500 Feet AGL

- 5- Steering - Off
- 6- Ice Protection - Set for Conditions*

*Out of Icing Conditions:

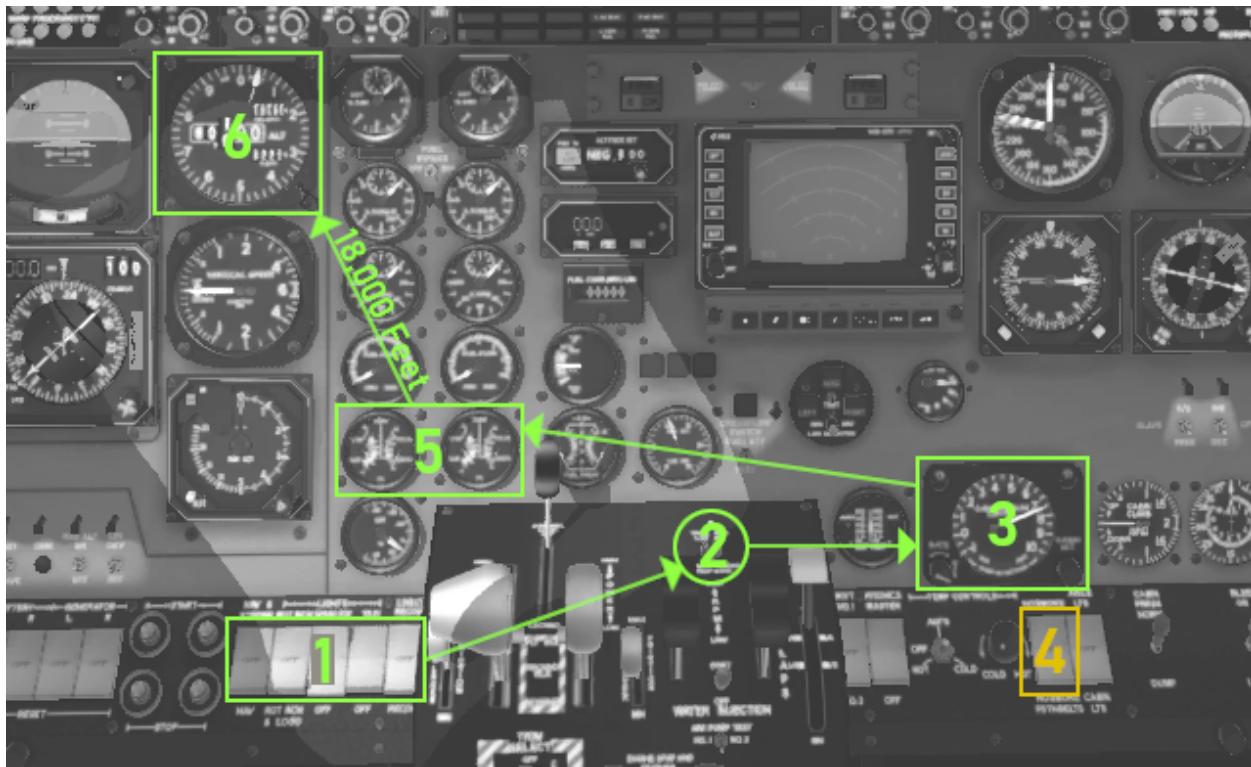
- L/R Pitot Heat On
- Windshield Heat High

*Inside Icing Conditions:

- L/R Pitot & SAS Heat On
- L/R Prop and Duct Heat On
- Windshield Heat High

- 7- Pressurization - Verify
(Cabin Climb Rate Lower than VSI)
- 8- After-Takeoff Checklist - Accomplish

Flow #8 (10,000 Foot Flow):



Passing 10,000 feet, we begin to configure the Metroliner for the cruise portion of the flight. There is no checklist for this flow, as the settings adjusted won't result in any damage to the airplane if they are inadvertently missed. Still, for best results and least frustration, make sure to follow the 10,000 Foot Flow.

Passing 10,000 Feet MSL*

(Or Cruise Below 10,000 MSL)

1- Lights - Nav, Strobes, and Beacon On

2- Prop Sync - Climb & Cruise

3- Pressurization - 7,500 feet

4- Seatbelts - Off (Optional, Smooth Air

Only, No Smoking Stays On)

5- Oil Temp and Pressure - Observe

*MSL=Mean Sea Level (In other words,
what the barometric altimeter reads.)

Passing 18,000 MSL

6- Altimeter - Baro Set 29.92

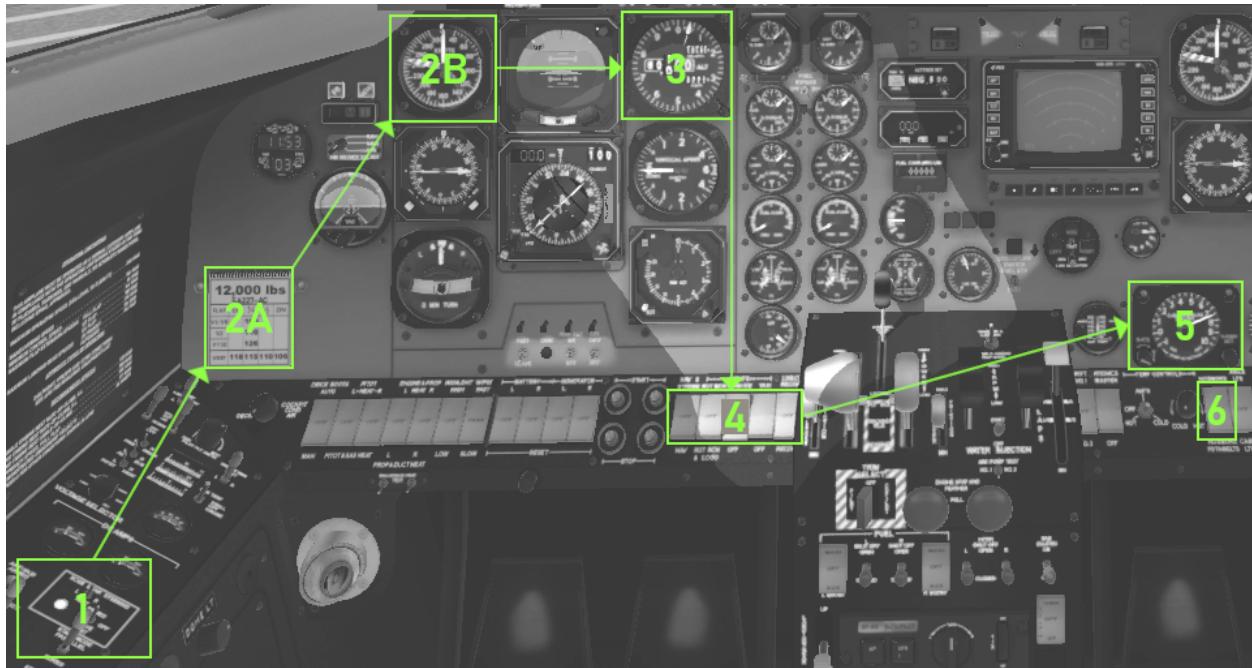
Flow #8 (Cruise Flow):



Time to take a breath; but first, finish your flows! The Cruise Flow is a relatively easy bit of housekeeping that will make for a smooth, quiet(er) phase of flight. The TPE-331 has a very narrow range of acceptable speed settings and the propellers can only be slowed to 97% RPM. It's still loud, but a nice relief on longer legs.

- 1- Power Setting - Adjust Until 620 Degrees EGT
- 2- Speed Levers - Set for Conditions:
 - No Known Icing - 97% RPM
 - Known Icing - 100% RPM
- 3- Pressurization - Cabin Differential no more than 7.0 PSI.

Flow #9 (Descent Flow):



10,000 Feet Above your destination altitude, it's time to get serious again. The Descent Flow is when we configure our airplane for the approach phase. First and foremost is the briefing. The arrival and approach are discussed, notes are taken for the weather, and passing 18,000 MSL, the altimeter is configured. At 10,000 AGL, most of the work here is systematic, configuring the altimeter and pressurization systems.

Before Top of Descent:

A- Arrival Briefing

B- Approach Briefing

At 18,000 MSL:

C- Altimeter - Set Altimeter to Baro
reading at destination.

At 10,000 Above Destination Elevation

1- Steering - Armed

2- Vref (Flaps ½ or Full) - Set Airspeed
Bug

3- Altimeter - Verify Baro set for
Destination

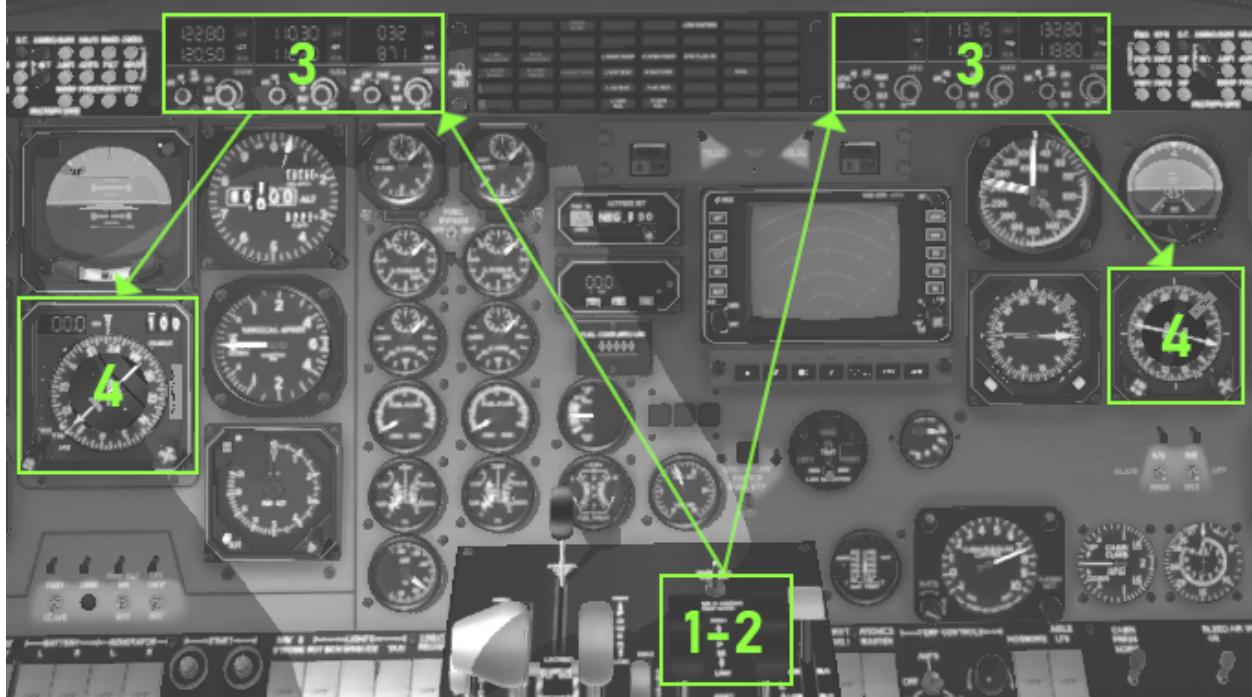
4- Lights - All On

5- Pressurization - Destination Elevation
Plus 500

6- Seatbelts & Smoking - On

7- Descent Checklist - Accomplish

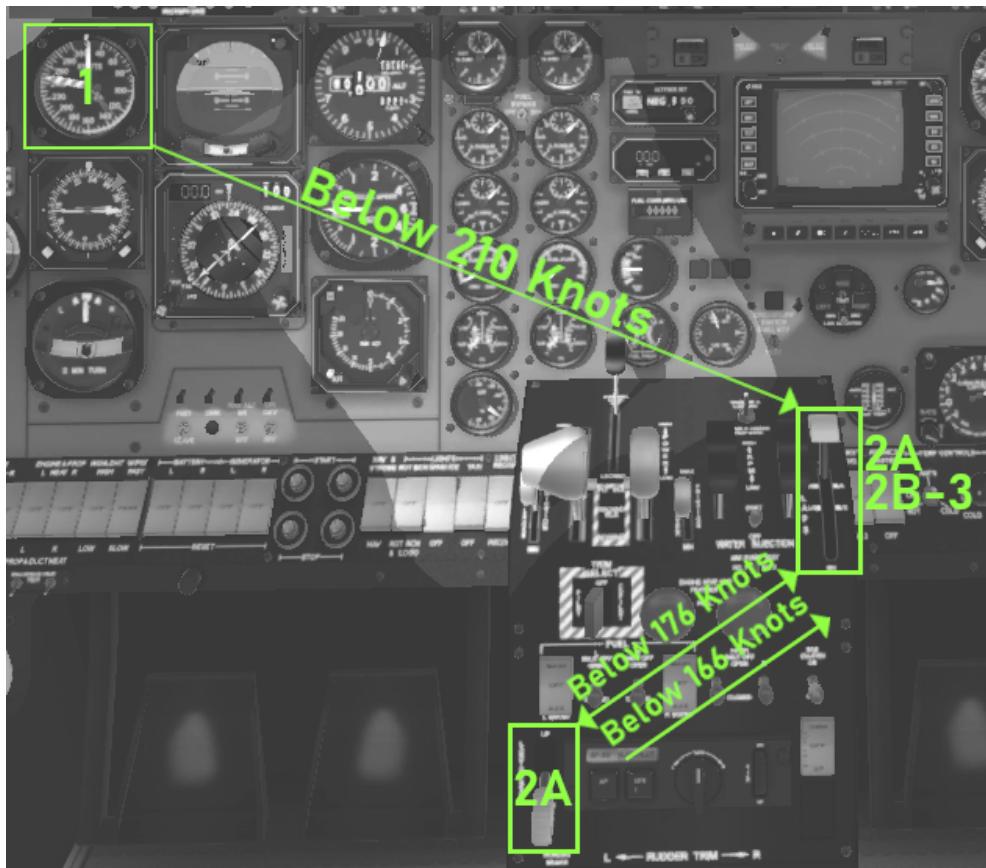
Flow #10 (Approach Flow):



Time to fly the approach! Because of the great variety in approach types and weather, when to accomplish this flow is subjective. A good place to do it is somewhere between 10,000 AGL to 5,000 AGL. Essentially, between the arrival and the approach phase of flight. Radar vectors, visual approach clearance, or 20 miles from the destination airport are good rules of thumb for when to accomplish the Approach Flow.

- 1- Propeller Sync - Takeoff & Landing
- 2- Speed Levers - High
- 3- Radios - Set for Approach
- 4- Course - Set for Approach
- 5- Approach Checklist - Accomplish

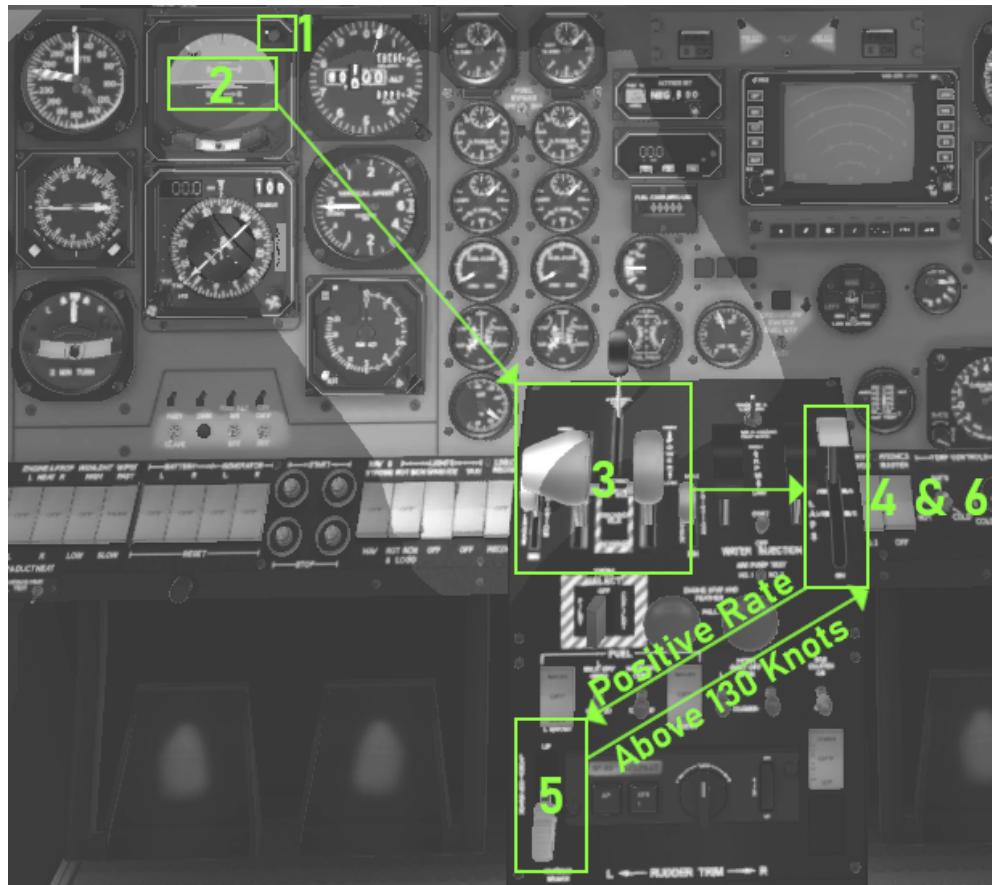
Flow #11 (Landing Flow):



The Landing Flow is just a matter of airspeed that starts at about 3,000 feet AGL. Start off by slowing the Metroliner below 210 knots. Now select Flaps 1/4. Slow further to below 176 knots and lower the landing gear and select flaps to 1/2. Slow to below 166 knots. If you selected flaps Full numbers, select flaps full at 1,000 AGL. Accomplish the checklist, slow to your Vref speed, then place all your attention on the final approach segment...

- 1- Below 210 Knots - Flaps 1/4
- 2- Below 176 Knots - Gear Dn, Flaps 1/2
- 3- 1,000 Feet AGL, Below 166 - Flaps Full (Optional)
- 4- Final Approach Segment - Slow to Vref
- 5- Landing Checklist - Accomplish

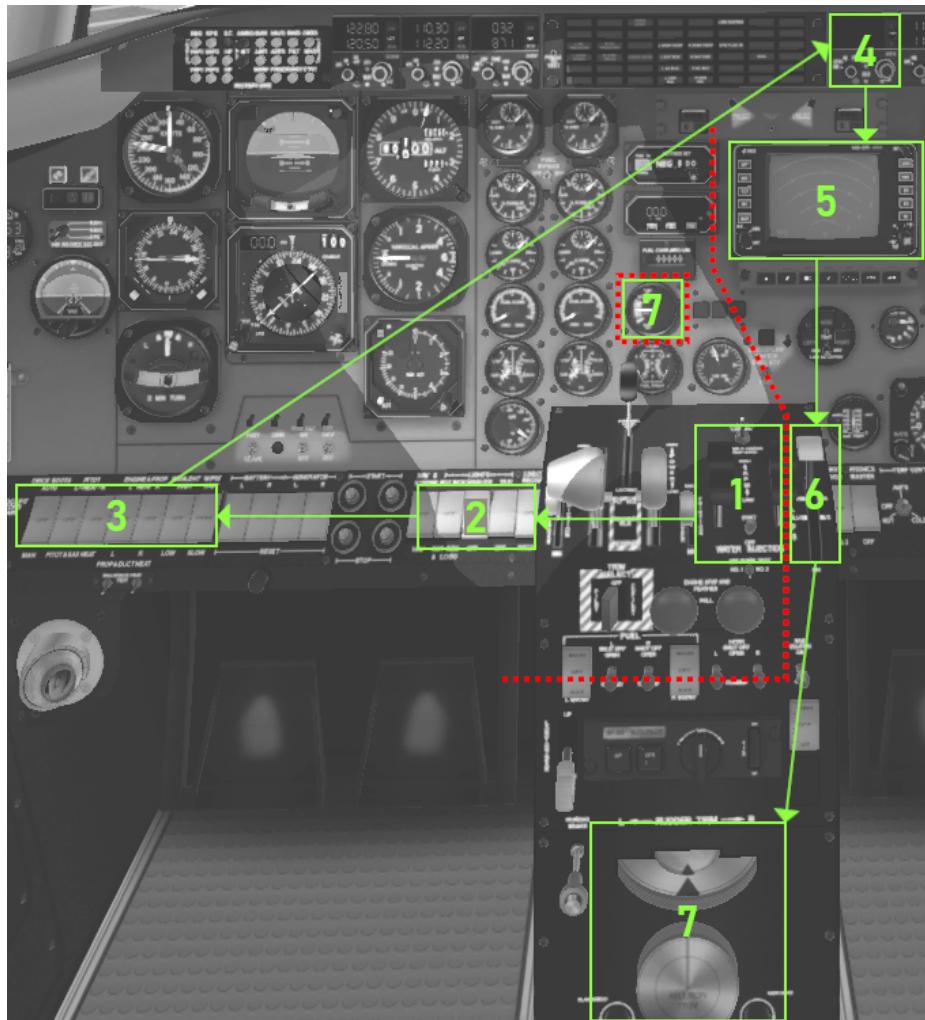
Flow #12 (Missed Approach):



Let's say that you flew the approach flawlessly, but never broke out of the fog by the minimum descent altitude. Or, let's say it was a flawless visual approach, but the airport maintenance truck had a breakdown while inspecting the runway and will not be clear by your arrival. Action needs to be taken... immediately! Enter the missed approach. This procedure gets you back into the air and set up for another approach. A regular After Takeoff checklist follows, then an approach flow and checklist, and then you're set up for another landing. You can always go-around!

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 1- GA Button - Push | 4- Flaps - Verify or Set for $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| 2- Pitch - Nose up to 10 Degrees Pitch | 5- Positive Climb Rate - Gear Up |
| 3- Power Levers - Max Power (Torque or EGT Limit)
Full (Optional) | 6- Above 130 Knots - Flaps Up |
| | 7- At 1,000 AGL - After Takeoff Checklist |

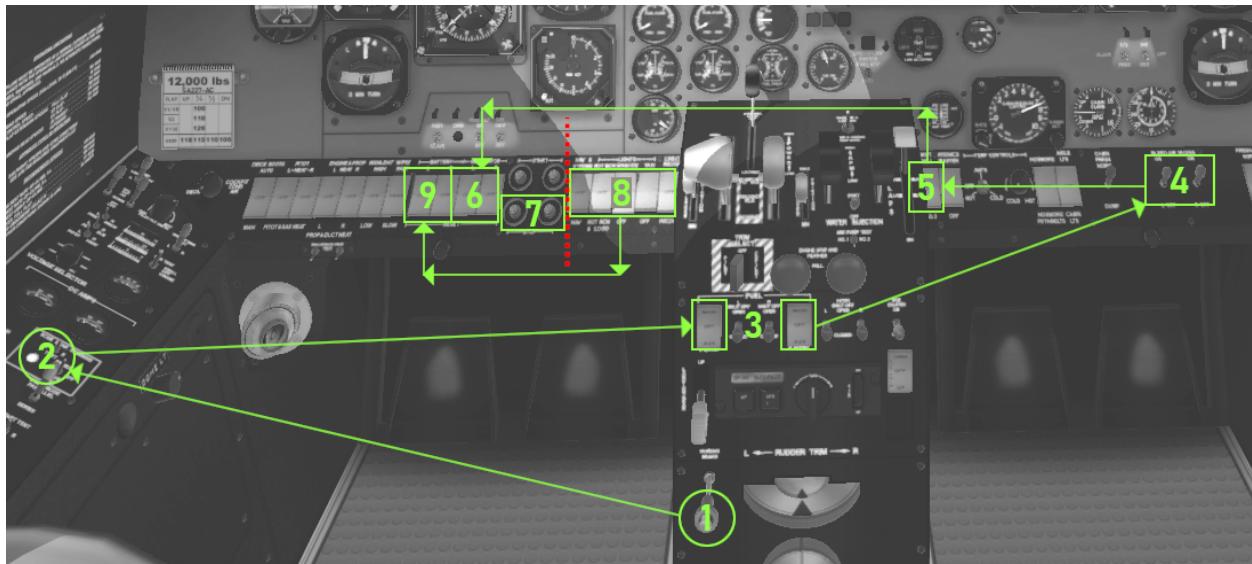
Flow #13 (After Landing):



Now let's say that the approach worked out, or that truck on the runway magically started running again. You've landed, and now you've slowed below 40 knots. Once you're either stopped off the runway or you're on a long, straight taxiway, now it's time for the After Landing Flow.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1- Speed Levers - Low | 5- Radar - Off |
| 2- Lights - Landing & Strobe Off | 6- Flaps - Up |
| 3- Ice Protection - All Off | 7- Trims - All Centered |
| 4- Transponder - Standby | 8- After-Landing Checklist - Accomplish |

Flow #13 (Parking and Shutdown):



You've made it to the gate or parking area! Time to stop spinning those props and unload whatever you're carrying with you. The Parking and Shutdown Flow is divided into two parts: Props Spinning and Props Stopped. After that, the airplane is either left connected to ground power for the next flight, or power is shut down if the aircraft will be parked for an extended period of time.

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| 1- Parking Brake - Set | 6- Generators - Off |
| 2- Steering - Off | 7- Stop Buttons - Push
—WAIT FOR PROPS TO STOP— |
| 3- Boost Pumps - Off | 8- Lights -All Off Except Nav |
| 4- Bleeds - Off | 8a- Seatbelts - Off (Smoking On) |
| 5- Inverters - Off | 9- Ground Power - Connect (Optional)
Batteries - Off |
| | 10- Parking and Shutdown Checklist -
Accomplish |

For the Sticklers and the Pedantic:

I've never flown a Metroliner. I've never even ridden as a passenger on a Metroliner. So, I have no idea how a metroliner sounds or handles other than interviews with a few people that I know, articles I've read, and online videos.

Still, I believe that the model depicted here has been done to the best of my abilities and as close to reality as I can currently manage. Some parts aren't perfect, but hopefully those faults are tolerable. If it seems like some sections are hobbled together, then it's worth noting that some parts of the airplane were improvised as new features crept in. My next project will be a little less seat-of-the-pants than the Metroliner.

Regardless of the potential discrepancies with reality, I'm still quite proud of the Metroliner and hope that the vast majority of users find the model enjoyable. If anyone with actual experience in the Metro would like to comment on a few things that could be more realistic, drop me a message!

About the Author:

I've been flying airplanes for 20 years and my love of flight simulators goes back even further, ever since I was playing Microsoft Flight Simulator on our black and white Mac SE. I currently fly a Q400 for a regional carrier and love going to work every day. I've flown a variety of aircraft over my career in a few different roles. Right now, I'm doing my favorite kind of flying... so far.

I started modeling airplanes with Blender back in 2016, and over the years I never got any of my projects to the point of release, let alone incorporating them into a simulator. Around the time that Covid hit, I suddenly found myself with a tremendous amount of free time. I decided to use this time to develop an airplane for release. After many attempts, I realized that perhaps it would be best to start simple and focus on a project that gets finished, rather than a project that looks exceptionally nice. This resulted in my first release: a Dash 8-102. The experience taught me about the great deal of work that goes into releasing an airplane project for X-Plane. It also instilled in me a great joy in modeling airplanes.

I currently live in Southern Oregon with my wife and three dogs. Outside of aviation, my hobbies include surfing, hiking, golf, working with tools, writing, and vintage computers and programs.

My spare time is, of course, well-utilized.

Closing Remarks/Contact Info:

The flows and procedures discussed in this manual are not sufficient for real-world flying. The procedures have been greatly simplified for the enjoyment of the general public. If the urge to try out flying in real life is just too much to resist, seek professional flight instruction from a real-life instructor. You won't regret it!

Please feel free to do a repaint of this aircraft. I really enjoy seeing what the community is capable of. The model is made to be much easier to repaint than my first project. Also, please note that the Metroliner is split into a cargo and a passenger model. The interior textures from these models may look similar, but they are not interchangeable. For those of you that do a repaint on this model, please give credit to me for the model, but feel free to give yourself credit for the paint job (especially if it's bad). No modifications without permission from the original author.

Have fun!

-StarvingPilot

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