



EAA CHAPTER 430
VMC/IMC CLUB MEETING



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Question of the Month

This Month's Question:

During flight, you notice an anomaly with the electrical system, with the ammeter and battery voltage indicating a discharge. What steps can you take to restore or prolong electrical power as you navigate to an available airport?



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Question of the Month

This Month's Question and Answer:

Question:

During flight, you notice an anomaly with the electrical system, with the ammeter and battery voltage indicating a discharge. What steps can you take to restore or prolong electrical power as you navigate to an available airport?

Answer:

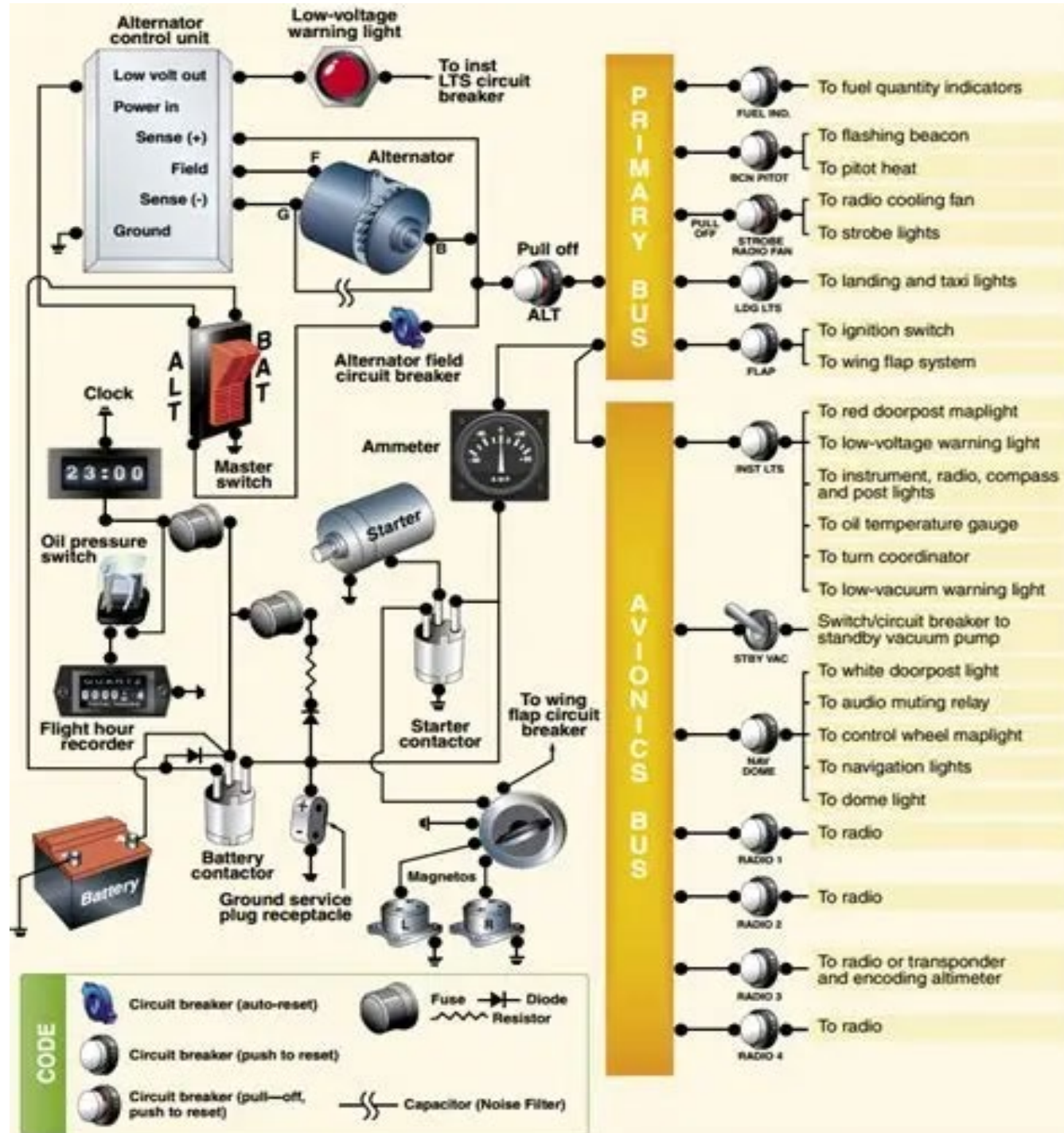
The first step is to follow the checklist for the abnormal condition. If the aircraft manual does not provide a checklist for this situation, consider the following:



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1. Verify that the alternator switch is turned on.
2. If the switch is on, turn it off, wait a few seconds, and then turn it back on. If this doesn't resolve the problem, continue the steps below.
3. Check the circuit breakers for open circuits.
4. If the problem is not resolved, continue to the nearest available airport.
5. Turn off any unnecessary electrical items to conserve remaining battery power for essential navigation, communication, and gear and flap operation.
6. If on a flight plan or if using ATC flight following, advise ATC of your situation and request a diversion and any other required assistance. If not, contact the local area ATC and advise them of your situation and any request(s) you might have.



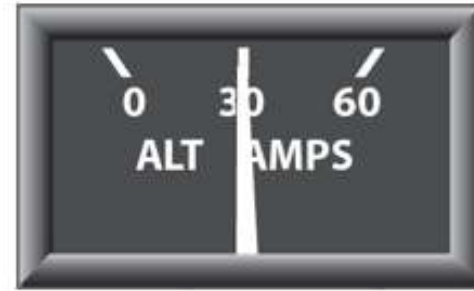


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Question of the Month



Ammeter



Loadmeter



Image adapted from: FAA-H-8083-31, Aviation Maintenance Technician Handbook, Volume 2.

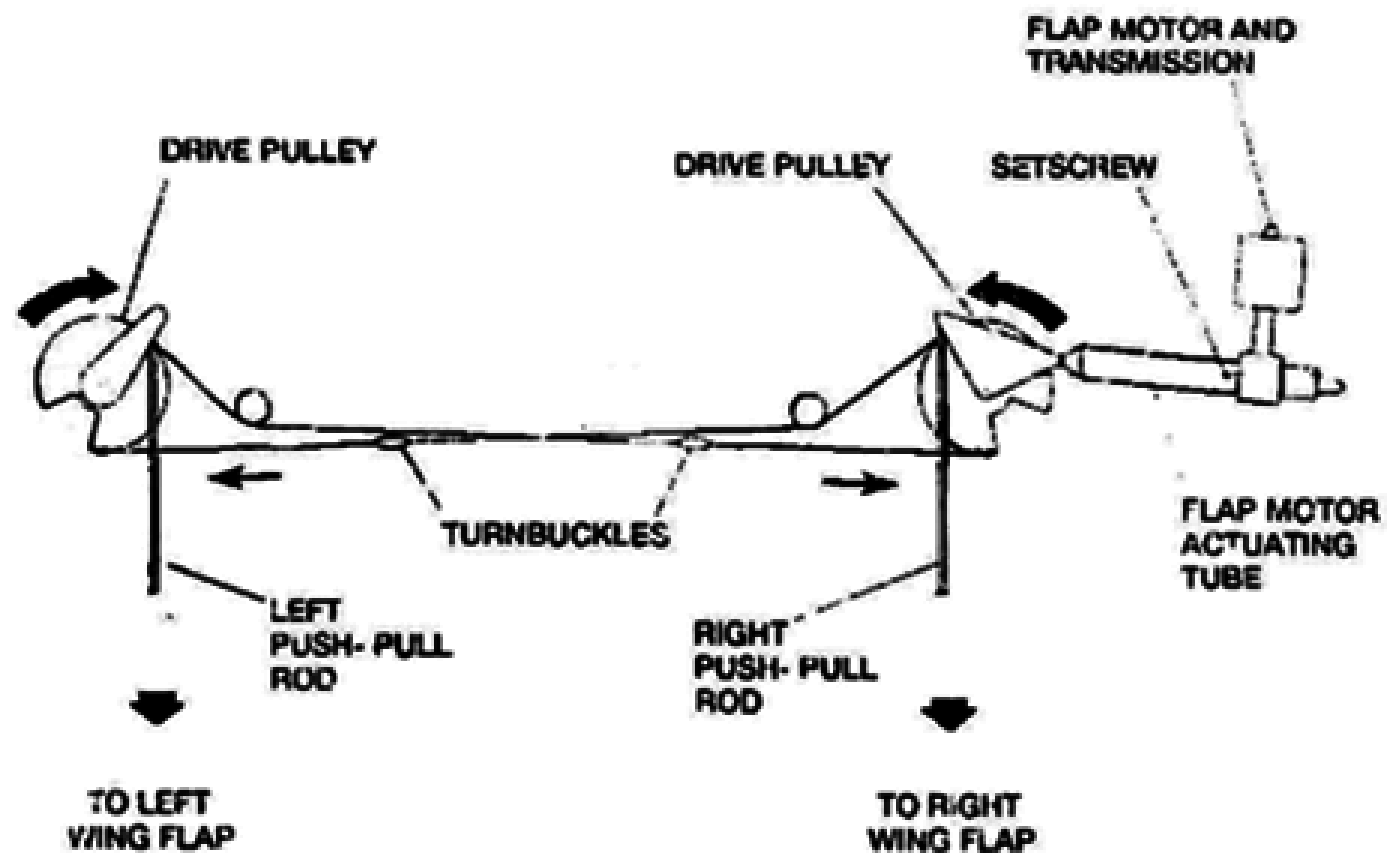


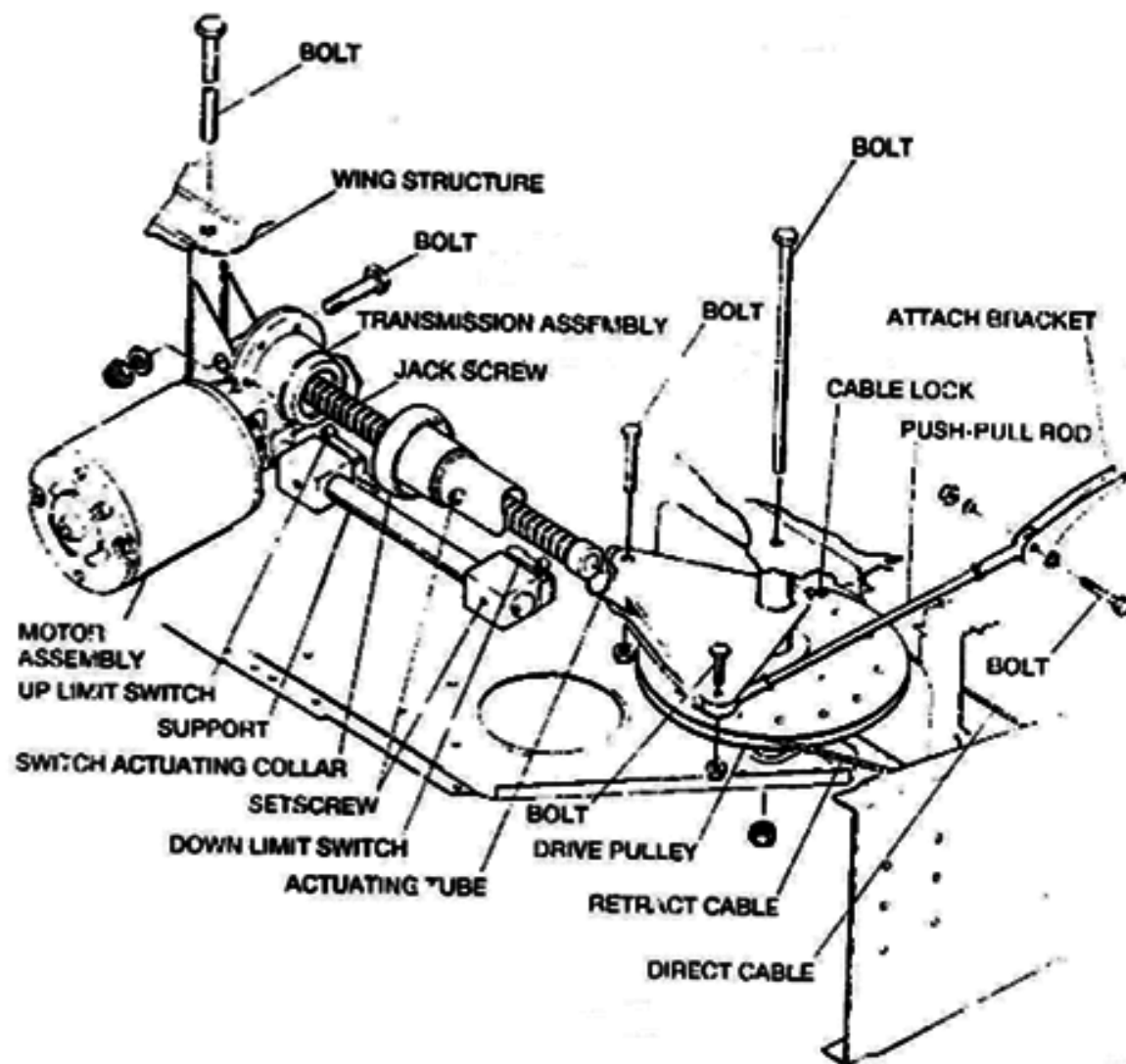


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Question:

You are flying an instrument approach to a familiar airport and runway, and the ceiling is at minimums. Nearing the runway, you recognize the river and a street that leads directly toward the runway. With these landmarks in sight, can you safely descend below minimums?



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Question:

You are flying an instrument approach to a familiar airport and runway, and the ceiling is at minimums. Nearing the runway, you recognize the river and a street that leads directly toward the runway. With these landmarks in sight, can you safely descend below minimums?

Answer:

The short answer is "no." Even though it is a familiar approach, descending below minimums puts you at risk of collision with unseen obstacles, equipment, and terrain. According to FAR 91.175(c), a pilot may descend below the authorized Decision Altitude (DA) or Minimum Descent Altitude (MDA) on an instrument approach only if all three of the following conditions are met simultaneously:



- 1) **Position for Normal Descent** The aircraft must be continuously in a position from which a descent to the intended runway can be made at a normal rate of descent using normal maneuvers. For Part 121/135 operations, the descent rate must also allow touchdown within the touchdown zone.
- 2) **Visibility Requirement** The observed flight visibility must be at or above the visibility minimums published for the approach procedure.
- 3) **Visual Reference Requirement:** At least one of the following runway environment references must be distinctly visible and identifiable to the pilot:
 - Approach light system (except that you may not descend below 100 ft AGL using only approach lights unless red terminating bars or red side row bars are also visible).
 - Threshold
 - Threshold markings
 - Threshold lights
 - Runway end identifier lights
 - Visual glideslope indicator (VASI/PAPI)
 - Touchdown zone or touchdown zone markings
 - Touchdown zone lights
 - Runway or runway markings
 - Runway lights



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Key points:

- The regulation does not require seeing the entire runway; it requires specific, approved visual cues that confirm you are on the correct runway and in a position to land safely.
- At 100 ft AGL, you may descend using only approach lights, but you must then have other visual references to continue to landing.
- If any of these conditions are not met, you must execute a missed approach immediately.
- This is what the regulations say, and what is considered legal. In an emergency, a pilot may deviate from the regulations to the extent necessary to meet the needs of the emergency.



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When is an Alternate Required

Under 14 CFR 91.169, a pilot must file an alternate airport unless the destination airport has an instrument approach and the weather is forecast to meet the **1-2-3 rule**: at least **2,000 feet** ceiling and **3 statute** miles visibility from **1 hour before to 1 hour after** the estimated time of arrival for fixed-wing aircraft.

Alternate Airport Weather Minimums

The weather at the alternate airport must meet or exceed the following minima at the estimated time of arrival:

- **Precision approach available**: Ceiling **600 feet**, visibility **2 statute miles**
- **Non-precision approach available**: Ceiling **800 feet**, visibility **2 statute miles**
- **No instrument approach**: Conditions must allow descent from the MEA and landing under **basic VFR** [eCFR+2](#)

Non-standard alternate minimums may exist due to terrain, navigation limitations, or lack of weather reporting. These are indicated on approach charts with a special symbol, and the exact minima can be found in the **Terminal Procedures Publication (TPP)** or flight planning software



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