

Cessna 185 Skywagon Model Guide

The Cessna 185 Skywagon is a single-engine piston, 4 to 6 seat, fixed-gear tailwheel utility aircraft built from 1961 to 1985. Registry data for the whole 185 family (185 through A185F) shows up to 145 kt cruise, up to 700 nm range, up to 18000 ft ceiling and up to 5 passengers. Treat those as family maximums, not figures for any one example.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Check the tail cone first. AD 2018-CE-060-AD requires inspecting the known crack area every 500 flight hours or 5 years, whichever comes first.
- The Cessna 185 Skywagon has fixed conventional spring gear and a tailwheel. A titanium main gear STC exists for the 180 and 185.
- One listed 1977 A185F had 2262 hours, 1397 lbs useful load, an IO-550 engine and 84 gallons of fuel. The asking price was \$320,000 in September 2023.
- A Cleveland wheel and brake conversion kit (199-62A, STC SA63GL) covers 180, 185 and 206 series aircraft.

TAIL CONE AND AIRFRAME

The tail cone reinforcement angle is a known crack area. A McFarlane STC splice replaces the OEM angle, and it can also be fitted to an already cracked aircraft. At each 100 hour or annual inspection, check the splice rivets and bolts, look for skin cracks or dents, check the stabilizer for play, and check that trim moves freely. Cessna Service Letter SEL-55 covers the stabilizer pivot inspection.

LANDING GEAR AND BRAKES

The gear legs bolt and wedge into a gear box. Each leg carries a fixed axle and an independently controlled brake. The titanium gear STC instructions call for routine gear inspection at 50 hour intervals. Cleveland wheels and brakes can be fitted with kit 199-62A. A stabilizer jackscrew access cover kit (SK185-27, 1981) is available for the 180, 185 and A185.

WHAT A WELL-EQUIPPED EXAMPLE LOOKS LIKE

A 1977 A185F listing showed an IO-550 engine, a three-blade prop, 84 gallons of long-range fuel, a float kit never used, an S-Tec 50 autopilot and a JPI 700 engine monitor. It also showed complete logs, repairs only at 980 TT in 1987, and no corrosion. The seller says the buyer must verify the specification.

SPECIFICATIONS

Example A185f Useful Load Lbs	1397
Example A185f Long Range Fuel Gal	84
Example 185a Full Fuel Gal	84.5

PERFORMANCE

Family Max Cruise Speed Kt	145
Family Max Range Nm	700
Family Max Service Ceiling Ft	18000
Observed 185a Climb Rate Fpm	1000

SAFETY NOTES

- An AAIB report on a 1962 185A found no fault that caused the accident. The pilot likely became incapacitated after takeoff, or the aircraft was slightly out of trim.
- The AAIB pilot had 395 hours, only 42 of them on type. Plan type-specific training before flying a Cessna 185 Skywagon.
- If the tail cone shows cracks or dents, remove the horizontal stabilizer and inspect it per Cessna Service Letter SEL-55.