



While much can be said about the proper technique for hand propping, every single procedural detail and every single accident report supports two, make that three, inviolable rules:

- #1—Don't get hit by the prop.
- #2—Don't let the airplane get away.
- #3—Don't be stupid.

Failure to comply with rule #1, renders rule #2 moot. Based on my reading of NTSB reports, one should be very mindful of #3 as well:

JUNE 30, 2012: TAYLORCRAFT BC12-D

The used small chocks around the tires and did not tie down the tail before attempting to hand-prop the engine. The engine subsequently started, taxied out of the small chocks and began turning in circles. The airplane continued to circle, dragging the pilot, and struck a parked airplane before coming to rest.

JANUARY 25, 2011: PIPER PA-28R-201T TURBO ARROW III

The pilot shut down the engine on a remote dirt airport but the battery was too weak to restart it. The pilot hand-propped the engine, which started but accelerated before the pilot could enter the airplane, first hitting a berm and then continuing over a cliff.

MAY 31, 2010: CESSNA 172K SKYHAWK

The pilot moved the propeller and the engine started immediately; however, the hand brake did not hold and it started to accelerate. The pilot was unable to catch the airplane as it crossed the taxiways and interposed grass before it finally stopped when it collided with terrain prior to the runway.