

What are those holes on the side of my Seabee?

A good friend of mine tried to takeoff for a sight-seeing trip with a few people in a Piper Cherokee. He made it just a few feet above the runway when the engine quit! They got the Cherokee back to the hangar and discovered the fuel vent was blocked by a mud dauber (aka Sceliphirini-winged creature that builds nests in ANY hole it can find). The vent tube was a perfect location for their habitat. Those little insects build a nest fast! If they are allowed to penetrate our vents they can be blocked off in a matter of hours.

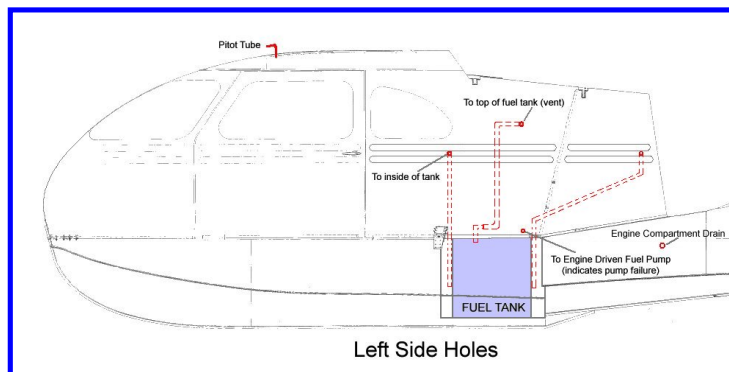
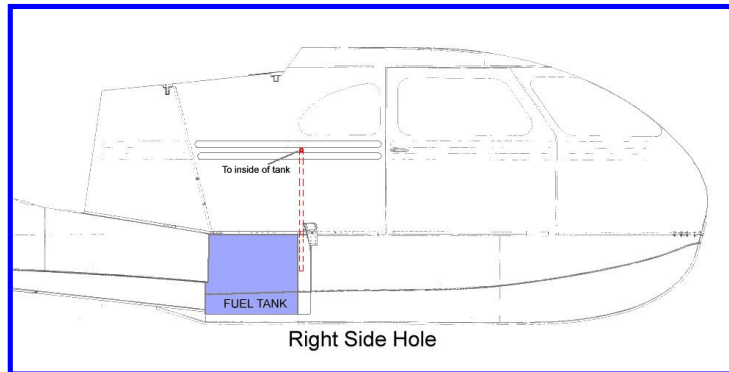
The Seabee is not immune to the speedy, horrifying work of these flying pests. So, where are the fuel vents on our Seabees? On the right and left side of the fuselage there should be small pipes sticking out into the airstream. There are three on the left side and one on the right side. There may be a chance that your Seabee is different but it is important to know where they are and which is which. More importantly, have a way to block these holes when your Seabee is in the hangar or outside for extended periods of time. There are many caps or plugs to choose from and some even use colored pipe cleaners to fill the vents temporarily while land-based.



Three vent flags on left side



There is a vent on the left and right side that go down into the tank compartment. These vents are just aft of the rear window and don't terminate in the tank. They are placed along the forward bulkhead and clamped in place. These are designed to suck any fuel vapors inside the compartment to outside the Seabee and not into the cabin. The ends of these tubes that are exposed outside the airframe are angled; one side is angled forward and the other side is angled aft. This "pressurizes" the fuel tank compartment slightly to get the fumes out.



Vents and pitot positions on the left and right side of the Seabee

There is another vent on the left side close to the end of the boat tail. This vent goes into the fuel tank compartment as well but is attached to the aft bulkhead with clamps. Like the other two it is NOT inside the tank but sucks fumes outside.

The other vent in between the two mentioned above DOES go to the fuel tank. It connects to the top of the fuel tank cover to provides venting as the fuel is used. If this gets plugged up fuel starvation is definitely in your future. This is what happened to the Cherokee.



The last hole is on the left side and is rather large. This is a drain for the engine compartment. Any fuel, oil or water that makes its way into the compartment will come out here. Bugs don't seem to like this one so no cover is necessary but some people cover it anyway. There have been Seabees with an empty oil bottle cut and fit under the rubber grommet to catch anything that comes out. See drawing above for locations.

Now pick your favorite covers and put them on. Don't forget the pitot tube! An easy pitot cover is a small piece of rubber tubing with a rivet or bolt to cover the end with a flag attached to the other end AND long enough to hang down into the cabin so you won't forget it.

A cheap way to plug the vent holes is to use large pipe cleaners. They are available at most craft stores or even Walmart. They can be bent so they won't fall into the vent hole and a flag can be attached to the end so they will be noticeable on your preflight inspection. As long as something is in the hole no bugs will get in.

On most Seabees with an engine driven fuel pump there is a small (1/8") tube extending outside somewhere. This tube is attached to the fuel pump and if there is ever an internal leak in the pump, fuel will squirt out this hole. Normally there should be no fuel coming out but if you see it (normally after the engine is started) shut down and get it fixed.

Fly safely!