



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	FARMINGTON, NM	Accident Number:	FTW95LA275
Date & Time:	07/01/1995, 0733 MDT	Registration:	N4823T
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-32-260	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	5 None

Flight Conducted Under: Part 91: General Aviation - Personal

Analysis

DURING THE AIRCRAFT PREFLIGHT INSPECTION, THE PILOT VERIFIED THE MAIN FUEL TANKS WERE FULL BUT DID NOT CHECK THE AUXILIARY TANKS. WHILE PERFORMING THE PRE-TAKEOFF CHECK, THE PILOT 'GLANCED AT' THE FUEL SELECTOR AND 'THOUGHT IT WAS ON THE LEFT MAIN' FUEL TANK. SHORTLY AFTER TAKEOFF AND AT AN ALTITUDE OF 150 FEET, THE ENGINE LOST POWER. THE AIRPLANE LANDED 'VERY HARD' ON THE TAKEOFF RUNWAY, 800 FEET FROM THE DEPARTURE END. POSTACCIDENT INSPECTION DISCLOSED THE RIGHT AUXILIARY FUEL TANK HAD ABOUT 2 INCHES OF FUEL AT THE BOTTOM OF THE TANK. THE LEFT AUXILIARY FUEL TANK WAS DRY AS IT WOULD NOT REGISTER ON A DIPSTICK.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT'S FAILURE TO VERIFY THE FUEL TANK SELECTOR POSITION AND THE RESULTANT FUEL STARVATION INDUCED POWER LOSS.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER(TOTAL) - NONMECHANICAL
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

Findings

1. (C) FUEL TANK SELECTOR POSITION - NOT VERIFIED - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (C) FLUID,FUEL - STARVATION

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY LANDING AFTER TAKEOFF

Occurrence #3: HARD LANDING
Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Findings

3. AIRPORT FACILITIES,RUNWAY/LANDING AREA CONDITION - RUNWAY

Factual Information

On July 1, 1995, at 0733 mountain daylight time, a Piper PA-32- 260, N4823T, was substantially damaged during a forced landing at Farmington, New Mexico. The private pilot and his four passengers were not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed.

The following is based on the pilot/operator report. Prior to departing Page, Arizona, on June 30, the pilot checked the two auxiliary fuel tanks and estimated each contained 5 gallons. He flew to Farmington, New Mexico, where he requested that the main tanks be filled to capacity. Prior to his departure from Farmington on July 1, the pilot checked the main fuel tanks and verified they were full. He did not check the auxiliary fuel tanks. While performing the pre-takeoff check, the pilot "glanced at" the fuel selector and "thought it was on the left main" fuel tank. Shortly after takeoff from Farmington and at an altitude of 150 feet, the engine lost power. The pilot switched the fuel selector "to the next tank to the right," then made a "very hard" landing on the 800 feet of runway remaining.

According to the Piper PA-32 Owner's Handbook, fuel tank selector positions (from left to right) are as follows: LEFT AUX - LEFT MAIN - RIGHT MAIN - RIGHT AUX. An OFF position is also provided.

According to the statement submitted by the Federal Aviation Administration inspector who examined the airplane, the pilot stated "he might have made his takeoff" with the fuel selector in the left auxiliary fuel tank position. The pilot asked the inspector "how long it would take for fuel to reach the engine if it had exhausted the fuel supply from a fuel tank." The inspector said the right auxiliary fuel tank had about 2 inches of fuel at the bottom of the tank. The left auxiliary fuel tank "was completely dry as it would not measure on the dipstick."

In the pilot/operator report the pilot wrote, "In the future, I will always check all of the tanks on the airplane and not assume that the auxiliary tanks are unimportant."

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	40, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	03/24/1994
Occupational Pilot:	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:		
Flight Time:	396 hours (Total, all aircraft), 246 hours (Total, this make and model), 361 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 39 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 19 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N4823T
Model/Series:	PA-32-260 PA-32-260	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:		Serial Number:	32-7200025
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	07/01/1994, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3400 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	96 Hours	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2669 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-540-E4B5
Registered Owner:	KENNETH J. CRANE	Rated Power:	260 hp
Operator:	KENNETH J. CRANE	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	FMN, 5503 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	0647 MDT	Direction from Accident Site:	0°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 8000 ft agl	Visibility	50 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None / 0 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	10 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	70°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	13° C / 10° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	(FMN)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	VFR
Destination:	BOISE CITY, OK (17K)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	0733 MDT	Type of Airspace:	Class D

Airport Information

Airport:	FOUR CORNERS REGIONAL (FMN)	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	5503 ft	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	5	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	6501 ft / 150 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Forced Landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	4 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	5 None	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	ARNOLD W SCOTT	Report Date:	09/24/1995
Additional Participating Persons:	MANUEL C LOPEZ; ALBUQUERQUE, NM		
Publish Date:			
Investigation Docket:	NTSB accident and incident dockets serve as permanent archival information for the NTSB's investigations. Dockets released prior to June 1, 2009 are publicly available from the NTSB's Record Management Division at pubinquiry@ntsb.gov , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/ .		

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The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).