



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

<b>Location:</b>	FELTON, PA	<b>Accident Number:</b>	NYC97FA025
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	12/02/1996, 2045 EST	<b>Registration:</b>	N5538J
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Piper PA-32-260	<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal, 2 Serious
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

The pilot departed the round trip cross country flight with a total of 50 gallons of fuel. The first flight was 2 hours and 15 minutes. Prior to the return night flight, the pilot elected not to refuel the airplane. The airplane was one hour into the return flight, 70 nautical miles from the departure point, and 90 miles from the final destination, when the engine lost total power. The pilot then performed a forced landing, during which the airplane impacted trees. Examination of the wreckage revealed no evidence of preimpact failures with the airplane. A few tablespoons of fuel was observed in the carburetor gascolator. Both main fuel tanks had ruptured and were absent of fuel. There was no evidence of a fuel spill in the vicinity of the wreckage. The last refueling facility was tested and found free from contamination. The fuel burn was calculated to be 14 gallons per hour allowing a total flight endurance of 3.5 hours with no reserve. The airplane was operated for 3.3 hours prior to losing total engine power.

## Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's inadequate preflight planning and preparation, and his failure to refuel which resulted in fuel exhaustion and the subsequent collision with trees during the forced landing.

## Findings

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

### Findings

1. (C) PREFLIGHT PLANNING/PREPARATION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (C) REFUELING - NOT PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) FLUID,FUEL - EXHAUSTION

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING  
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT  
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

### Findings

4. OBJECT - TREE(S)

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	39
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine Land	<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	Airplane Single-engine
<b>Flight Time:</b>	490 hours (Total, all aircraft), 20 hours (Total, this make and model), 451 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 37 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 16 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Piper	<b>Registration:</b>	N5538J
<b>Model/Series:</b>	PA-32-260 PA-32-260	<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Operator:</b>	AIRPARK SALES AND SERVICE, INC	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Lycoming
<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	On-demand Air Taxi (135)	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	O-540-E4B5
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual Conditions	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Night/Dark
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	LNS, 403 ft msl	<b>Weather Information Source:</b>	Weather Observation Facility
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None / 0 ft agl	<b>Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:</b>	Calm / ,
<b>Temperature:</b>	-1 °C	<b>Visibility</b>	15 Miles
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>			
<b>Departure Point:</b>	SCRANTON, PA (AVP)	<b>Destination:</b>	LEONARDTOWN, MD (2W6)

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Serious	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal, 1 Serious	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>			

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	RANDI-JEAN KUKLA	<b>Adopted Date:</b>	11/06/1998
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	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 <a href="mailto:pubin@ntsb.gov">pubin@ntsb.gov</a> , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at <a href="http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/">http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/</a> .		

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