



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	PITTSBURGH, PA	Accident Number:	IAD97LA056
Date & Time:	04/02/1997, 1410 EST	Registration:	N3616J
Aircraft:	Cessna 150	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

After reviewing the flight planning, the flight instructor (CFI) approved the student pilot's solo cross-country flight. The student then departed on the cross-country flight for his destination, which was 110 miles away. The student said he found some of his check points, but after the planned elapsed time, he could not find the airport. He continued to search, and did not use his radio for assistance. The student became disoriented, and the airplane was tracked on radar into Class 'B' airspace, until it impacted the ground about 2 miles from an international airport. The student reported he was forced to land 'after running out of fuel' about 85 miles west of his destination. The airplane manual stated there were 3.5 gallons of unusable fuel. About 2.5 gallons of fuel were drained from the airplane.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the student pilot inadvertently became lost/disoriented during a cross-country flight, and failed to use his radio for assistance, which led to fuel exhaustion, loss of engine power, and a forced landing.

Findings

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

Findings

1. (C) BECAME LOST/DISORIENTED - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (C) IN-FLIGHT PLANNING/DECISION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) FLUID,FUEL - EXHAUSTION

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

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY LANDING

Factual Information

On April 2, 1997, about 1410 eastern standard time, a Cessna 150, N3616J, was substantially damaged during a collision with the terrain from a forced landing near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The student pilot was uninjured. Visual meteorological conditions existed and no flight plan was filed for the solo cross country flight conducted under 14 CFR Part 91.

The certificated flight instructor reported that he reviewed the student pilot's cross country planning, and signed the student's third class medical/student pilot certificate for the solo cross country flight. The student pilot stated that he departed Hazleton Municipal Airport, Hazleton, Pennsylvania, about 1050, destined for Clearfield-Lawrence Airport, Clearfield, Pennsylvania, about 110 miles west. The student pilot stated that "the highway (Interstate 80) would led him to his destination." He reported that he found some of his check points, but after the elapsed time, he could not see the airport. The student pilot reported that he thought his position was south of the airport, and he searched for his destination. The student pilot stated that he could not explain why he did not make any radio calls for assistance, only that he became disoriented.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Air Traffic Controllers tracked the airplane's transponder into Pittsburgh International Airport's Class B airspace. The airplane impacted the ground about 85 miles west of the intended destination. The pilot reported that he had no mechanical problems, and flew until forced to land "after running out of fuel."

A FAA Inspector examined the wreckage on April 3, 1997. The location was approximately 2 miles east of the Pittsburgh International Airport, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The Inspector reported that the pilot landed up slope on hilly, rough terrain. The nose landing gear and strut were broken off and lying on the ground near the initial impact point. The firewall was bent upward approximately 2 inches and the right wing tip leading edge was crushed causing spar damage and buckling at the wing root. Flaps were found at the 35 degree position. The Inspector reported about 2.5 gallons of fuel were drained from the fuel tanks, and the airplane's manual stated that 3.5 gallons of fuel were unusable.

The student pilot had accumulated 68.3 hours of flight time, with 45 hours in the Cessna 150.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Student	Age:	53, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	01/22/1997
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	68 hours (Total, all aircraft), 59 hours (Total, this make and model), 20 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N3616J
Model/Series:	150 150	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Utility	Serial Number:	150-64916
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	03/10/1997, 100 Hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1600 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	18 Hours	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2439 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed, activated, aided in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	O-200-A
Registered Owner:	CHRISTOPHER G. BLACK	Rated Power:	100 hp
Operator:	CHRISTOPHER G. BLACK	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:	NORTH STAR AVIATION	Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	PIT, 1204 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	2 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	1351 EST	Direction from Accident Site:	270°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 3000 ft agl	Visibility	10 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None / 0 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	4 knots / 16 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	Variable	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	16° C / -8° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	HAZLETON, PA (HZZ)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	VFR
Destination:	CLRFLD LAWRENCE, PA (N97)	Type of Clearance:	VFR
Departure Time:	1100 EST	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Wreckage and Impact Information

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	JIM CAIN	Report Date:	10/30/1998
Additional Participating Persons:	JOE MCBRIDE; WEST MIFFLIN, PA		
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 pubinq@ntsb.gov , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at http://dms.ntsbt.gov/pubdms/ .		

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), established in 1967, is an independent federal agency mandated by Congress through the Independent Safety Board Act of 1974 to investigate transportation accidents, determine the probable causes of the accidents, issue safety recommendations, study transportation safety issues, and evaluate the safety effectiveness of government agencies involved in transportation. The NTSB makes public its actions and decisions through accident reports, safety studies, special investigation reports, safety recommendations, and statistical reviews.

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](#).