



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	GALVESTON, TX	Accident Number:	FTW98LA038
Date & Time:	11/01/1997, 1119 CST	Registration:	N40201
Aircraft:	Piper PA-23-250	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Minor

Flight Conducted Under: Part 91: General Aviation - Ferry

Analysis

After takeoff, at about 250 to 300 feet AGL, the right engine lost partial power, followed by the left engine. The pilot made a wide left turn toward a small field with trees in front, and retracted the landing gear. During the forced landing, the pilot 'intentionally' hit the trees in order to slow down and go under some power lines. After going under the wires, the airplane came to a stop in the field. The airplane had not been flown for about two years, and the pilot was to ferry the aircraft for the owner from Galveston, TX, to Colorado Springs, CO. A mechanic at the Scholes Field Airport in Galveston prepared the airplane for the flight and obtained a ferry permit from the FAA. The mechanic reported that the fuel tanks were drained and visually inspected. About one gallon of water was drained from the tanks, and both fuel filters were cleaned. The mechanic also reported that rained had fallen on the day before the accident flight. Examination of the fuel filters revealed that they were both clogged with debris.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: inadequate maintenance and/or preflight inspection of the airplane, and subsequent blockage of the fuel filters, which led to fuel starvation, partial loss of engine power in both engines, and a forced landing. A related factor was the lack of suitable terrain for the forced landing.

Findings

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

Findings

1. 2 ENGINES
 2. (C) MAINTENANCE,INSPECTION - INADEQUATE
 3. (C) FUEL SYSTEM,FILTER - BLOCKED(PARTIAL)
 4. (C) FLUID,FUEL - STARVATION
-

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

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

Findings

5. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - NONE SUITABLE
6. OBJECT - TREE(S)
7. OBJECT - WIRE,TRANSMISSION

Factual Information

On November 1, 1997, at 1119 central standard time, a Piper PA-23-250 twin engine airplane, N40201, registered to and operated by a private owner as a Title 14 CFR Part 91 ferry flight, was substantially damaged during a forced landing following a loss of engine power near Galveston, Texas. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and a flight plan was not filed. The airline transport rated pilot, sole occupant of the airplane, sustained minor injuries. The flight had just originated from the Scholes Field Airport, Galveston, Texas.

During a personal interview conducted by the NTSB investigator-in-charge, the pilot reported that the airplane had not been flown for approximately two years, and he was to ferry the aircraft for the owner from Galveston to Colorado Springs, Colorado. A mechanic at the Scholes Field Airport prepared the airplane for the flight and obtained a ferry permit from the FAA. The pilot further reported that after takeoff from runway 31, at about 250 to 300 feet AGL, the airplane's right engine lost partial power, and then the left engine lost partial power. He made a wide left turn towards a small field with trees in front and retracted the landing gear. During the emergency landing to the field, he "intentionally" hit the trees in order to slow down and go under some power lines. After going under the wires the airplane came to a stop in the field.

Examination of the airplane by the FAA inspector revealed fire damage to both the left and right engines. Both wings and both horizontal stabilizers were structurally damaged. Examination of the fuel filters revealed that they were both clogged with debris.

During a personal interview conducted by the NTSB investigator-in-charge, the mechanic who performed maintenance on the airplane to get it ready for the ferry flight reported that the airplane had been parked outside for two years at the Seafood Warehouse, a private airstrip. Before ferrying the airplane to Galveston for further maintenance, the fuel tanks were drained and visually inspected. About one gallon of water was drained from the tanks before fuel started draining out. Both fuel filters were cleaned. There were no problems with the engines during the ferry flight to Galveston.

The mechanic also reported that he did not fly the airplane, but he did taxi it. While taxiing the airplane, he spun it around to dislodge any debris that might be in the fuel bladders. He also shook both wings and no debris was found. The mechanic further reported that he had test run the engines for about 10 hours. During the test run, one engine was not developing full power, and he had another mechanic change the engine's fuel injectors.

The mechanic reported that it rained the day before the accident flight. A flight instructor told the mechanic that he observed the pilot walk out to the airplane; however, he "did not see the pilot sump the fuel." He also observed the pilot perform several high speed taxis before taking off. During these taxis the engines were "sputtering and coughing." During the ensuing takeoff, both engines sounded good until the airplane started to turn. As the airplane turned, one engine lost power, and then the other engine lost power.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline Transport; Commercial; Flight Engineer	Age:	50
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane Multi-engine; Airplane Single-engine	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	11/21/1996
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	10000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 100 hours (Total, this make and model), 9000 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 50 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 15 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N40201
Model/Series:	PA-23-250 PA-23-250	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	27-7304998
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	03/01/1996, 100 Hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	TIO-540-C1A
Registered Owner:	RICHARD C. HOLDEN	Rated Power:	250 hp
Operator:	RICHARD C. HOLDEN	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	GLS, 7 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	1 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	1045 CST	Direction from Accident Site:	130°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear / 0 ft agl	Visibility	10 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None / 0 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	10 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	280°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	27° C / 19° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	(GLS)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	COLORADO SPRGS, CO (COS)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1119 CST	Type of Airspace:	Class D

Wreckage and Impact Information

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	DOUGLAS D WIGINGTON	Report Date:	10/30/1998
Additional Participating Persons:	ARTHUR RINDNER; HOUSTON, TX		
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.nts.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](#).