



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

<b>Location:</b>	LITTLE FALLS, MN	<b>Accident Number:</b>	CHI98FA187
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	06/01/1998, 1831 CDT	<b>Registration:</b>	N541N
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Cessna 421	<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation -		

## Analysis

A witness reported the airplane did not climb above 200 feet and reported seeing the airplane 'wobbling up and down' as it attempted to climb. He reported the airplane went into a sharp left bank and nose dived down. The airplane burned upon impact. The wreckage was located in a wooded area about 3/4 mile from the approach end of runway 30. Numerous open farm fields were located near the airplane's flight path. The winds were reported at 240 degrees at 22 knots gusting to 29 knots. The wreckage path was on a 040 heading and covered about 190 feet from initial tree impact to the location of the main wreckage. The engine inspection did not reveal any anomalies to either engine. The flight was the first maintenance check flight after the airplane had not been flown for 14 months. During maintenance the pilot had put about 100 gallons of water in the left main and left auxiliary fuel tanks to locate a fuel leak. A plug was installed in the left auxiliary fuel drain valve and the fuel tank could not be checked during preflight for fuel contamination without removing the plug.

## Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's continued operation with a known deficiency in equipment.

## Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER  
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF

### Findings

1. MAINTENANCE - IMPROPER - OWNER/PILOT MECHANIC
2. FUEL SYSTEM - CONTAMINATION, WATER
3. (C) OPERATION WITH KNOWN DEFICIENCIES IN EQUIPMENT - CONTINUED - OWNER/PILOT MECHANIC

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING  
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER  
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

### Findings

4. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	62
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None
<b>Flight Time:</b>	6000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1500 hours (Total, this make and model)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Cessna	<b>Registration:</b>	N541N
<b>Model/Series:</b>	421 421	<b>Engines:</b>	2 Reciprocating
<b>Operator:</b>	GEORGE FORTIER III	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Continental
<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	GTSIO-520-D
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation -		

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual Conditions	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	BRD, 1226 ft msl	<b>Weather Information Source:</b>	Weather Observation Facility
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None / 0 ft agl	<b>Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:</b>	22 knots / 29 knots, 240°
<b>Temperature:</b>	21° C	<b>Visibility:</b>	10 Miles
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>			
<b>Departure Point:</b>	(LXL)	<b>Destination:</b>	

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	LITTLE FALLS-MORRISON (LXL)	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	
<b>Runway Used:</b>	0	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>			

## Wreckage and Impact Information

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

## Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): JIM SILLIMAN Adopted Date: 03/31/2000

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](mailto:pubinq@ntsb.gov), or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at <http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/>.

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