



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

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<b>Location:</b>	PACIFIC OCEAN, PO	<b>Accident Number:</b>	LAX92AMS03
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	03/01/1992, 0017 PST	<b>Registration:</b>	N2425U
<b>Aircraft:</b>	CESSNA 172D	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	2 Fatal
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

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## Analysis

THE CERTIFICATED PRIVATE PILOT AND A PASSENGER DEPARTED A COASTAL AIRPORT ON A NIGHT CROSS COUNTRY FLIGHT TO SO. LAKE TAHOE, CA, WITH A PLANNED TIME ENROUTE OF 3 HOURS. ABOUT 6 HOURS AFTER THE ESTIMATED DEPARTURE TIME, THE PILOT CONTACTED A FLIGHT SERVICE STATION, REPORTING THAT HE WAS LOST AND WAS ON TOP OF AN OVERCAST IN INSTRUMENT METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS WITH LESS THAN ONE HOUR OF FUEL REMAINING. THROUGH COMMUNICATIONS EFFORTS RADAR CONTACT WITH SEATTLE CENTER WAS ESTABLISHED; THE AIRPLANE WAS LOCATED ABOUT 110 MILES WEST OF THE U.S. COAST LINE AND GIVEN RADAR VECTORS TO RETURN TO THE COAST. ABOUT 15 MINUTES AFTER RADAR CONTACT, THE PILOT REPORTED FUEL EXHAUSTION, AND INDICATED THAT NO SURVIVAL EQUIPMENT WAS ON BOARD THE AIRPLANE. RADAR CONTACT WAS LOST WHEN THE AIRPLANE WAS ABOUT 70 MILES WEST OF THE COAST LINE. A SEARCH FAILED TO LOCATE THE AIRPLANE. THE PILOT AND PASSENGER ARE PRESUMED TO HAVE RECEIVED FATAL INJURIES AND THAT THE AIRPLANE WAS DESTROYED.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE FAILURE OF THE PILOT TO ADEQUATELY EVALUATE THE WEATHER CONDITIONS, AND CONTINUED VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC CONDITIONS WHICH RESULTED IN THE PILOT BECOMING LOST AND DISORIENTED. CONTRIBUTING TO THE ACCIDENT WAS THE LACK OF TOTAL AERONAUTICAL EXPERIENCE AND FUEL EXHAUSTION.

## Findings

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

### Findings

1. WEATHER CONDITION - CLOUDS
  2. WEATHER CONDITION - LOW CEILING
  3. (C) WEATHER EVALUATION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
  4. (F) LACK OF TOTAL EXPERIENCE - PILOT IN COMMAND
  5. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - CONTINUED - PILOT IN COMMAND
  6. LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT
  7. (C) BECAME LOST/DISORIENTED
  8. (F) FLUID,FUEL - EXHAUSTION
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Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING  
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

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Occurrence #3: DITCHING  
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

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Occurrence #4: MISSING AIRCRAFT  
Phase of Operation: UNKNOWN

## Factual Information

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Private	<b>Age:</b>	26, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine Land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Unknown
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	09/07/1990
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>		<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	82 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

### Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	CESSNA	<b>Registration:</b>	N2425U
<b>Model/Series:</b>	172D 172D	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	No
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	17250025
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Tricycle	<b>Seats:</b>	4
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	05/01/1991, Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	2300 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	20 Hours	<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>		<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	CONTINENTAL
<b>ELT:</b>	Installed, not activated	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	O-300-D
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	MCDONALD, LAWRENCE	<b>Rated Power:</b>	145 hp
<b>Operator:</b>	MC DONALD, REX	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Night/Dark
Observation Facility, Elevation:	CEC, 57 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	70 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	2338 PST	Direction from Accident Site:	86°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Thin Overcast / 0 ft agl	Visibility	7 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 800 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	10 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	170°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	7°C / -18°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	EUREKA, CA (EKA)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	LAKE TAHOE, CA (TVL)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	0000	Type of Airspace:	Class G

## Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	

## Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Scott R Erickson	Report Date:	08/26/1993
Additional Participating Persons:	BRUCE ALLEN; OAKLAND, CA		
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 <a href="mailto:pubinquiry@ntsb.gov">pubinquiry@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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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](#).