



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

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

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

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

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

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

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

Occurrence #4: MISSING AIRCRAFT
Phase of Operation: UNKNOWN

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	26
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	None
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	82 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	CESSNA	Registration:	N2425U
Model/Series:	172D 172D	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	MC DONALD, REX	Engine Manufacturer:	CONTINENTAL
Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None	Engine Model/Series:	O-300-D
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Night/Dark
Observation Facility, Elevation:	CEC, 57 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Weather Observation Facility
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 800 ft agl	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	10 knots / , 170°
Temperature:	7°C	Visibility	7 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	EUREKA, CA (EKA)	Destination:	LAKE TAHOE, CA (TVL)

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
Latitude, Longitude:			

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Scott R Erickson

Adopted Date: 08/26/1993

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.