



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Factual Report

Location:	HOUSTON, TX	Accident Number:	FTW99LA178
Date & Time:	07/01/1999, 2040 CDT	Registration:	N5788
Aircraft:	Piper PA-24-260	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	4 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

On July 1, 1999, at 2040 central daylight time, a Piper PA-24-260 airplane, N5788, was substantially damaged when it impacted terrain following a complete loss of engine power while executing a VFR approach to the West Houston Airport near Houston, Texas. The commercial pilot, who was one of four partners who owned the airplane, and her three passengers were not injured. Dusk visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 personal flight and a flight plan was not filed. The flight originated from the New Braunfels Municipal Airport, New Braunfels, Texas, at 1950.

According to the pilot and a fuel receipt, the airplane was "topped off" with 18 gallons of 100LL aviation fuel at New Braunfels. Subsequently, the airplane departed New Braunfels for Houston.

The 357-hour pilot reported that the airplane was on a VFR approach to runway 15 at the West Houston Airport. The airplane was on a left downwind leg, level at 1,100 feet agl, and abeam the runway numbers when she extended the landing gear. Simultaneously she heard a "loud bang" and noticed a loss of engine power. The instrument panel lights "flickered," and the illumination in the cockpit failed. The pilot then advanced the throttle and realized that the engine had lost total power. The pilot stated that she trimmed the airplane to attain the best glide speed, but did not verify the airspeed during the ensuing forced landing. She added that the airplane was descending "too fast," and she needed "more trim to relieve back pressure, but decided to muscle it as best [she] could and try not to stall the airplane." Subsequently, the airplane's nose wheel contacted a cement drainage area at the approach end of the runway and collapsed. The left main landing gear penetrated the wing structure, and the airplane slid approximately 250 feet down the runway, coming to a stop upright.

The pilot reported that the following light and weather conditions existed at the time of the accident: dusk light, visibility greater than 10 miles, clear skies, and wind from 150 degrees at 15 knots.

The airplane was equipped with a 260-horsepower Lycoming IO-540-D engine, which was examined and test run at Caulkins Aero, Houston, Texas, under the supervision of an FAA

inspector. The spark plugs, magnetos, oil filter, and air filter were examined before the test run and no anomalies were noted. The fuel selector valve "worked free and correct through all of its ranges," and fuel was present in each of the four fuel tanks. The engine was run in the airframe for a total of 28 minutes at various rpm and manifold pressure settings, including the maximum power setting. The engine operated within manufacturer's specifications. For further details reference the enclosed FAA inspector's statement.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	, Female
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):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	08/27/1997
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	357 hours (Total, all aircraft), 27 hours (Total, this make and model), 241 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N5788
Model/Series:	PA-24-260 PA-24-260	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	24-4580
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	11/01/1998, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3100 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	112 Hours	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4775 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	IO-540D
Registered Owner:	DAVID A. PYLE	Rated Power:	260 hp
Operator:	DAVID A. PYLE	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Dusk
Observation Facility, Elevation:	, 0 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	0000	Direction from Accident Site:	0°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear / 0 ft agl	Visibility	10 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None / 0 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	15 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	150°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	NEW BRAUNFELS, TX (BAZ)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	(IWS)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1950 CDT	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	WEST HOSUTON (IWS)	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	112 ft	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	15	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	3955 ft / 75 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Traffic Pattern

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	3 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	4 None	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	GEORGIA R SNYDER
Additional Participating Persons:	JACOB D JOHNSON; HOUSTON, TX
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/ .