



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

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

Analysis

The pilot failed to maintain the proper descent rate during a VFR approach, in dusk light conditions, following a complete loss of engine power, and the airplane undershot the runway. The airplane was on the downwind leg at 1,100 feet agl and was abeam the runway numbers when the pilot extended the landing gear. Simultaneously, she heard a loud bang and noticed a loss of engine power. The pilot 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 ditch at the approach end of the runway. Following the accident, the engine was test run in the airframe and found to operate within the manufacturer's specifications.

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to maintain the proper descent rate during a forced landing, which resulted in a runway undershoot. Factors were the total loss of engine power for an undetermined reason and the dusk light conditions.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER
Phase of Operation: APPROACH - VFR PATTERN - DOWNWIND

Findings
1. (F) REASON FOR OCCURRENCE UNDETERMINED

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

Findings
2. (C) PROPER DESCENT RATE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #3: UNDERSHOOT
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Occurrence #4: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Findings

3. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DUSK
4. TERRAIN CONDITION - DITCH

Pilot Information

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|----------------------------------|--|------------------------------|----------|
| Certificate: | Commercial | Age: | |
| Airplane Rating(s): | Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land | Instrument Rating(s): | Airplane |
| Other Aircraft Rating(s): | None | Instructor Rating(s): | None |
| 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

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|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Aircraft Make: | Piper | Registration: | N5788 |
| Model/Series: | PA-24-260 PA-24-260 | Engines: | 1 Reciprocating |
| Operator: | DAVID A. PYLE | Engine Manufacturer: | Lycoming |
| Operating Certificate(s) Held: | None | Engine Model/Series: | IO-540D |
| Flight Conducted Under: | Part 91: General Aviation - Personal | | |

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

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|---|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Conditions at Accident Site: | Visual Conditions | Condition of Light: | Dusk |
| Observation Facility, Elevation: | , 0 ft msl | Weather Information Source: | Pilot |
| Lowest Ceiling: | None / 0 ft agl | Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction: | 15 knots / , 150° |
| Temperature: | | Visibility | 10 Miles |
| Precipitation and Obscuration: | | | |
| Departure Point: | NEW BRAUNFELS, TX (BAZ) | Destination: | (IWS) |

Airport Information

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|-----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|---------|
| Airport: | WEST HOSUTON (IWS) | Runway Surface Type: | Asphalt |
| Runway Used: | 15 | Runway Surface Condition: | Dry |
| Runway Length/Width: | 3955 ft / 75 ft | | |

Wreckage and Impact Information

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): GEORGIA R SNYDER

Adopted Date: 06/22/2000

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, 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.