



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	PALO ALTO, CA	Accident Number:	LAX00LA067
Date & Time:	12/02/1999, 1124 PST	Registration:	N4319Y
Aircraft:	Piper PA-28-181	Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

Prior to departure to return to home base, the pilot filed an IFR flight plan, conducted a preflight, and had the fuel tanks topped off. He flew on the left fuel tank for approximately 1 hour and then switched to the right fuel tank. Upon reaching his destination he noted multiple cloud layers, and requested and received an IFR clearance to his destination airport. About an hour later he switched back to the left fuel tank. He noted a drop to zero in the left fuel gage about 45 minutes later, and switched to the right tank, where he noted that the fuel gage read 5 gallons. He switched back to the left tank and the engine stopped; he switched back to the right tank and the engine restarted. He declared minimum fuel and received information on nearby airports; one 7 miles in his direction of flight, and his destination airport was 11 miles in his direction of flight. He continued the flight to the destination airport in order to lose altitude. He was at 4,000 feet, and traffic pattern altitude is 800 feet. He requested a straight in to a runway 30 even though 12 was the active runway. On short final, he initiated a go-around due to high speed, and high altitude. During the turn back to the runway the engine lost power and landed in a marshy area. There was no fuel observed in the tanks during the recovery of the airplane. During the engine examination it was noted that there was no fuel staining observed on the wings or fuselage of the airplane, and there were no leaks in the fuel system. No discrepancies were noted with the run-up.

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The failure of the pilot to properly calculate fuel consumption rate, and his improper in-flight planning to continue the flight to the destination airport instead of landing at a closer alternate airport. A factor was the pilot's inadequate aircraft control during the descent, which necessitated a go-around.

Findings

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

Findings

1. (C) FLUID,FUEL - EXHAUSTION
2. (C) FUEL CONSUMPTION CALCULATIONS - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) IN-FLIGHT PLANNING/DECISION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: GO-AROUND (VFR)

Findings

4. TERRAIN CONDITION - SWAMPY
5. (F) AIRCRAFT CONTROL - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
6. (F) GO-AROUND - ATTEMPTED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	46
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	920 hours (Total, all aircraft), 28 hours (Total, this make and model), 920 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 44 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 13 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N4319Y
Model/Series:	PA-28-181 PA-28-181	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	WEST VALLEY FLYING CLUB	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None	Engine Model/Series:	O-360
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	PAO, 3 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Weather Observation Facility
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 2000 ft agl	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	10 knots / , 150°
Temperature:	13°C	Visibility	4 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	CARLSBAD, CA (CRQ)	Destination:	(PAO)

Airport Information

Airport:	PALO ALTO (PAO)	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Runway Used:	30	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Length/Width:	2500 ft / 65 ft		

Wreckage and Impact Information

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): TEALEYE C CORNEJO

Adopted Date: 05/30/2001

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/>.

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