



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

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| Location: | VICTORVILLE, CA | Accident Number: | LAX00LA063 |
| Date & Time: | 01/02/2000, 1800 PST | Registration: | N3690L |
| Aircraft: | Cessna 172G | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Defining Event: | | Injuries: | 2 None |
| Flight Conducted Under: | Part 91: General Aviation - Personal | | |

Analysis

The pilot reported that, 2 hours 15 minutes after takeoff, the airplane's electrical generator failed and the airplane subsequently experienced electrical power failure. He said the engine then began to run rough. The recently licensed private pilot was not certain of his position and he made a precautionary landing at dusk on a county road. As the airplane touched down, the left wing struck a street sign which deflected the airplane across the highway median and across the (opposite direction) traffic lanes. The accident occurred 2 hours 45 minutes after takeoff. The airway distance from the departure airport to the intended destination was 167 nautical miles, and the distance to the accident location was approximately 142 nautical miles. Subsequent examination and a test run of the engine revealed no reason for the reported roughness.

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 maintain positional awareness, which resulted in his becoming lost and disoriented. Contributing factors were the pilot's delay requesting assistance from air traffic control and the failure of the airplane's electrical generator.

Findings

Occurrence #1: MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER

Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings

1. LIGHT CONDITION - DUSK
2. (C) BECAME LOST/DISORIENTED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) PROPER ASSISTANCE - DELAYED - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (F) ELECTRICAL SYSTEM, GENERATOR - FAILURE
5. PRECAUTIONARY LANDING - PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: ON GROUND/WATER COLLISION WITH OBJECT

Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Findings

6. OBJECT - SIGN

Factual Information

On January 2, 2000, at 1800 hours Pacific standard time, a Cessna 172G, N3690L, was substantially damaged during a precautionary landing on a county road at Victorville, California. The private pilot and one passenger were not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the personal flight, which was operated under 14 CFR Part 91 by Riverside (California) Air Service. The flight departed Bullhead City, Arizona, about 1515 and no flight plan was filed.

The pilot reported that 2 hours 15 minutes after takeoff, as he was flying along highway 15, the generator fail annunciator light came on. He reduced the electrical load and noted that the carburetor air temperature and exhaust gas temperature gauges were "climbing above the warning lines." The pilot contacted Southern California (SoCal) Approach Control and explained that he was "not familiar" with the area and requested a vector to the nearest airport. Before SoCal could help, the electrical power failed completely and the engine started to run rough. He decided to land on a road because he was "not sure" of his position and didn't know if the engine gauges were reading correctly. He also reported that the engine was "running rough" and "sputtering" at full throttle. As the airplane touched down, the left wing struck a street sign, which deflected the airplane across the highway median and off the other side of the road.

The accident time was 2 hours 45 minutes after takeoff. According to a GTE DUATS flight plan, the low altitude airway distance from Laughlin to Riverside is 167 nautical miles, and the distance from Laughlin to Victorville is approximately 142 nautical miles. The pilot had 90 hours total flying time and received his private pilot certificate on December 9, 1999.

The operator sent the engine to an engine repair facility where it was disassembled and inspected, including the carburetor and magnetos. The mechanic there told the Safety Board investigator that no discrepancies were noted that might have led to a power interruption or a rough running engine. The engine was subsequently reinstalled in the airplane and operated normally. The electrical charging system was found to be inoperative and the generator and voltage regulator were replaced.

Pilot Information

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|----------------------------------|--|--|----------------------------|
| Certificate: | Private | Age: | 35, Male |
| Airplane Rating(s): | Single-engine Land | Seat Occupied: | Left |
| Other Aircraft Rating(s): | None | Restraint Used: | Seatbelt, Shoulder harness |
| Instrument Rating(s): | None | Second Pilot Present: | No |
| Instructor Rating(s): | None | Toxicology Performed: | No |
| Medical Certification: | Class 1 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim. | Last FAA Medical Exam: | 10/08/1998 |
| Occupational Pilot: | | Last Flight Review or Equivalent: | |
| Flight Time: | 90 hours (Total, all aircraft), 90 hours (Total, this make and model), 16 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft) | | |

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

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|-------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Aircraft Make: | Cessna | Registration: | N3690L |
| Model/Series: | 172G 172G | Aircraft Category: | Airplane |
| Year of Manufacture: | | Amateur Built: | No |
| Airworthiness Certificate: | Normal; Utility | Serial Number: | 17253859 |
| Landing Gear Type: | Tricycle | Seats: | 4 |
| Date/Type of Last Inspection: | 10/20/1999, Annual | Certified Max Gross Wt.: | 2300 lbs |
| Time Since Last Inspection: | 26 Hours | Engines: | 1 Reciprocating |
| Airframe Total Time: | 6030 Hours | Engine Manufacturer: | Continental |
| ELT: | Installed | Engine Model/Series: | O-300-D |
| Registered Owner: | PAUL MCCLINTOCK | Rated Power: | 145 hp |
| Operator: | RIVERSIDE AIR SERVICE | Operating Certificate(s) Held: | None |

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

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|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Conditions at Accident Site: | Visual Conditions | Condition of Light: | Night/Dark |
| Observation Facility, Elevation: | DAG, 1927 ft msl | Distance from Accident Site: | 32 Nautical Miles |
| Observation Time: | 1750 PST | Direction from Accident Site: | 38° |
| Lowest Cloud Condition: | Clear / 0 ft agl | Visibility | 15 Miles |
| Lowest Ceiling: | None / 0 ft agl | Visibility (RVR): | 0 ft |
| Wind Speed/Gusts: | 10 knots / | Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Wind Direction: | 260° | Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Altimeter Setting: | 30 inches Hg | Temperature/Dew Point: | 8° C / -6° C |
| Precipitation and Obscuration: | | | |
| Departure Point: | BULLHEAD CITY, AZ (IFP) | Type of Flight Plan Filed: | None |
| Destination: | RIVERSIDE, CA (RAL) | Type of Clearance: | None |
| Departure Time: | 1515 PST | Type of Airspace: | Class G |

Wreckage and Impact Information

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|---------------------|--------|----------------------|-------------|
| Crew Injuries: | 1 None | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Passenger Injuries: | 1 None | Aircraft Fire: | None |
| Ground Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Explosion: | None |
| Total Injuries: | 2 None | Latitude, Longitude: | |

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): RICHARD B PARKER **Report Date:** 12/04/2000

Additional Participating Persons: R C MORTEN; RIVERSIDE, 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 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. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).