



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

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<b>Location:</b>	AUSTIN, NV	<b>Accident Number:</b>	LAX00TA212
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	06/01/2000, 0615 PDT	<b>Registration:</b>	N4872A
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Piper PA-18-150	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	2 Minor

**Flight Conducted Under:** Part 91: General Aviation - Public Aircraft

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## Analysis

The pilot reported that he had been monitoring an increase in the fuel burn rate over a period of time. His normal leaning procedure for best power operating from 5,800 feet mean sea level required more mixture control travel. On the day of the accident, it was the second time that the engine had failed to respond to throttle input. The subsequent loss of engine power occurred low to the terrain. Post accident examination of the carburetor revealed a black composite float that felt heavier than normal. One pontoon exhibited light damage to the smooth shell. The engine spark plugs were lightly fuel sooted. According to Precision Airmotive Corporation "mandatory" Service Bulletin MSA-1(replacement of composite floats with metal floats), the type certificate holder of the carburetor, states that; "field reports indicate that composite floats may be absorbing fluid and sinking," replace the existing composite float with a metal float. A sinking float may result in disruption of fuel flow to the engine, Precision Airmotive therefore considers the replacement of composite floats with metal floats mandatory. Compliance is optional for 14 CFR Part 91 operators.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: Loss of engine power caused by a fuel soaked float pontoon causing an over rich fuel/air mixture, in a critical phase of flight.

## Findings

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Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER  
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

### Findings

1. (C) FUEL SYSTEM,CARBURETOR FLOAT - SOAKED
2. (F) OPERATION WITH KNOWN DEFICIENCIES IN EQUIPMENT - CONTINUED - PILOT IN COMMAND

## Factual Information

On June 1, 2000, at 0615 hours Pacific daylight time, a PA-18-150, N4872A, collided with terrain while maneuvering near Austin, Nevada. The aircraft sustained substantial damage and the certificated commercial pilot and his passenger received minor injuries. The aircraft was being operated as a public-use flight by the United States Department of Agriculture, Office of Wildlife Services, when the accident occurred. The flight originated from the Austin airport at 0600. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time and a VFR company flight plan was filed.

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## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Airline Transport	<b>Age:</b>	46, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Front
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>		<b>Restraint Used:</b>	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	Airplane Single-engine	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 2 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	02/21/2000
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>		<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	04/29/1999
<b>Flight Time:</b>	8300 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1300 hours (Total, this make and model), 7740 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 109 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 44 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Piper	<b>Registration:</b>	N4872A
<b>Model/Series:</b>	PA-18-150 PA-18-150	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	No
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	18-4969
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Tailwheel	<b>Seats:</b>	2
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	04/01/2000, Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	1950 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	90 Hours	<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	3950 Hours	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Avco Lycoming
<b>ELT:</b>	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	O-320-
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	Randy McCoy	<b>Rated Power:</b>	150 hp
<b>Operator:</b>	DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None
<b>Operator Does Business As:</b>	WIDLIFE SERVICES	<b>Operator Designator Code:</b>	

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	30 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	Light and Variable /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	Variable	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	-2 °C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	AUSTIN, NV (9U3)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	Company VFR
Destination:	(9U3)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	0600 PDT	Type of Airspace:	Class G

## Wreckage and Impact Information

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

## Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	ROBERT R CRISPIN	Report Date:	07/15/2002
Additional Participating Persons:	CLARENCE BOHARTZ; FAA-WP-Flight Standards District Office; Reno, NV		
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 <a href="mailto:pubinq@ntsb.gov">pubinq@ntsb.gov</a> , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at <a href="http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/">http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/</a> .		

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](#).