



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	AUSTIN, NV	Accident Number:	LAX00TA212
Date & Time:	06/01/2000, 0615 PDT	Registration:	N4872A
Aircraft:	Piper PA-18-150	Injuries:	2 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Public Aircraft		

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

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

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

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline Transport	Age:	46
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane
Other Aircraft Rating(s):		Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane Single-engine
Flight Time:	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

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N4872A
Model/Series:	PA-18-150 PA-18-150	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE	Engine Manufacturer:	Avco Lycoming
Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None	Engine Model/Series:	O-320-
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Public Aircraft		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Weather Information Source:	Pilot
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	Light and Variable / , Variable
Temperature:	-2° C	Visibility	30 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	AUSTIN, NV (9U3)	Destination:	(9U3)

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
Latitude, Longitude:			

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	ROBERT R CRISPIN	Adopted Date:	07/15/2002
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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