



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

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|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Location: | Fajardo, PR | Accident Number: | MIA03LA176 |
| Date & Time: | 09/01/2003, 1130 AST | Registration: | N8578U |
| Aircraft: | Cessna 172F | Injuries: | 1 None |
| Flight Conducted Under: | Part 91: General Aviation - Personal | | |

Analysis

According to the pilot, after taking off, at an altitude of about 300 feet, the airplane's engine lost power. The pilot performed a 180-degree turn back to the runway, but due to the low altitude was unable to reach the runway. He elected to land in a field about 1/2 mile from the runway. The pilot explained it had been close to 3 weeks since the airplane had last been flown. He said he drained large quantities of water from both the left and right wing fuel tank sump ports. He fueled the airplane with a total of about 29 gallons of 100 LL aviation fuel and drained a total of a gallon of fuel from both wing tanks, with "no" indication of water in the fuel. The individual who recovered the airplane from the field stated when up righting the engine, a noticeable amount of water poured out of the carburetor. An Airframe and Power plant mechanic stated to the Federal Aviation Administration inspector that when the carburetor bowl drain plug was removed, only water came out of it, no fuel at all. At the time of the accident no water was utilized at the seen. Weather reports support that there was no rain in the area between the accident and the time the airplane was removed from the farm.

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's inadequate aircraft preflight resulting in the airplane being operated with water contamination in the fuel system, and the loss of engine power.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

Findings

1. FUEL SYSTEM - CONTAMINATION, WATER
2. (C) AIRCRAFT PREFLIGHT - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. OPERATION WITH KNOWN DEFICIENCIES IN EQUIPMENT - ATTEMPTED - PILOT IN COMMAND

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

Occurrence #3: ON GROUND/WATER ENCOUNTER WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Findings

- 4. TERRAIN CONDITION - HIGH VEGETATION
- 5. TERRAIN CONDITION - DITCH

Pilot Information

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|------------------------------|----------|
| Certificate: | Airline Transport; Commercial | Age: | 64 |
| Airplane Rating(s): | Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land | Instrument Rating(s): | Airplane |
| Other Aircraft Rating(s): | None | Instructor Rating(s): | None |
| Flight Time: | 21642 hours (Total, all aircraft), 30 hours (Total, this make and model), 2 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft) | | |

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

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|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Aircraft Make: | Cessna | Registration: | N8578U |
| Model/Series: | 172F | Engines: | 1 Reciprocating |
| Operator: | On file | Engine Manufacturer: | Continental |
| Operating Certificate(s) Held: | None | Engine Model/Series: | O-360-A3A |
| 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: | Day |
| Observation Facility, Elevation: | TJSJ, 9 ft msl | Weather Information Source: | Weather Observation Facility |
| Lowest Ceiling: | None | Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction: | 13 knots / , 40° |
| Temperature: | 31 °C | Visibility | 10 Miles |
| Precipitation and Obscuration: | | | |
| Departure Point: | Fajardo, PR (TJFA) | Destination: | |

Airport Information

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|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|---------|
| Airport: | Diego Jimenez Torres (TJFA) | Runway Surface Type: | Asphalt |
| Runway Used: | 8 | Runway Surface Condition: | Unknown |
| Runway Length/Width: | 3600 ft / 75 ft | | |

Wreckage and Impact Information

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|-----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------|
| Crew Injuries: | 1 None | Aircraft Damage: | Destroyed |
| Passenger Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Fire: | None |
| Ground Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Explosion: | None |
| Latitude, Longitude: | 18.307778, -65.661667 | | |

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Alan J Yurman

Adopted Date: 12/30/2003

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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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.