



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	Phenix City, AL	Accident Number:	ATL06CA031
Date & Time:	01/01/2006, 1836 CST	Registration:	N4370P
Aircraft:	Piper PA-23-160	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 Minor, 1 None

Flight Conducted Under: Part 91: General Aviation - Personal

Analysis

The private pilot was on a visual flight rules cross country flight when he began encountering instrument conditions. The pilot continued into the instrument conditions for about 30 minutes before asking Atlanta Approach Control for directions to the nearest airport for landing. The controller directed the pilot to two different nearby airports but both were below minimums. The pilot informed the controller that he was low on fuel and needed to land as soon as possible. The controller directed the pilot to the Columbus Metropolitan Airport, Columbus, Georgia. The pilot told the controllers that he would attempt an Instrument approach. The pilot attempted four unsuccessful approaches with the controllers talking him through each approach. On the fifth approach, at five miles from the runway the pilot stated that both engine's quit due to fuel exhaustion. The pilot called "mayday" and during the forced landing the airplane collided with trees and the ground separating the right wing, half of the left wing, and coming to rest inverted. The pilot did not report any mechanical deficiencies with the airplane during the attempted approaches.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's inadequate decision to continue VFR flight into IMC conditions, which resulted in a loss of engine power due to fuel exhaustion.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER
Phase of Operation: CRUISE - NORMAL

Findings

1. WEATHER CONDITION - LOW CEILING
2. (C) IN-FLIGHT PLANNING/DECISION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) FLIGHT INTO ADVERSE WEATHER - CONTINUED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER(TOTAL) - NONMECHANICAL
Phase of Operation: APPROACH

Findings

4. (C) FLUID,FUEL - EXHAUSTION

Occurrence #3: FORCED LANDING
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Occurrence #4: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY LANDING

Findings

5. OBJECT - TREE(S)

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	48, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 With Waivers/Limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	07/01/2005
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	02/01/2004
Flight Time:	600 hours (Total, all aircraft), 600 hours (Total, this make and model), 600 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 30 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 12 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N4370P
Model/Series:	PA-23-160	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	23-1871
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	5
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	03/01/2005, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3800 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4071 Hours at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	O-320
Registered Owner:	Roy T. Dawes	Rated Power:	160 hp
Operator:	Roy T. Dawes	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Dusk
Observation Facility, Elevation:	CSG, 397 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	5 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	1558 EST	Direction from Accident Site:	230°
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Visibility	1.5 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 400 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	6 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	70°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.98 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	16° C / 14° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	Light - Rain; Fog		
Departure Point:	Brooksville, FL (BKV)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Winder Barrow, GA (WDR)	Type of Clearance:	VFR Flight Following
Departure Time:	1316 EST	Type of Airspace:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Minor, 1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 Minor, 1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	32.421111, -85.248056

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Butch Wilson	Report Date:	03/28/2006
Additional Participating Persons:	Robert Bullock; Birmingham FSDO-09; Birmingham, AL		
Publish Date:			
Note:	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.		
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. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).