



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	Andersonville, GA	Accident Number:	MIA07LA129
Date & Time:	08/01/2007, 1130 EDT	Registration:	N5721N
Aircraft:	Piper J3C-65	Injuries:	2 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

According to an FAA inspector, he interviewed several witnesses who said that the pilot was giving airplane rides from his private grass airstrip. On the fifth and final airplane ride, during initial climb after takeoff, the engine stopped. The inspector said that witnesses told him that they saw the airplane turn about 180 degrees toward the departure runway, but it descended quickly and impacted the ground in a level attitude. The on scene examination revealed the presence of fuel, and no obvious anomalies. An examination was performed by the NTSB, and a representative from the engine manufacturer. During the examination, crash related damaged parts were replaced, and a club propeller was fitted. The engine was then test run. Initially, when fuel was added, the fuel poured from the carburetor, consistent with the needle valve having been stuck in the open position due to an obstruction. After tapping on the wall of the carburetor, the obstruction was cleared, and fuel stopped flowing out of the carburetor. The test run was then completed without further anomalies. A teardown examination of the carburetor revealed debris within the carburetor float bowl large enough to block the needle valve, or fuel metering orifice.

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's improper decision to make a 180-degree turn at low altitude to return to the departure runway following a loss of engine power during takeoff-initial climb. A factor in the accident was contamination in the carburetor.

Findings

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

Findings

1. (F) FUEL SYSTEM,CARBURETOR - CONTAMINATION,OTHER THAN WATER

Occurrence #2: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING - TURN TO REVERSE DIRECTION

Findings

2. ALTITUDE - LOW - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) IN-FLIGHT PLANNING/DECISION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. STALL/MUSH - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

5. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	57
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	209 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Manufacturer:	Piper	Registration:	N5721N
Model/Series:	J3C-65	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	Charles W. Hodges	Engine Manufacturer:	Teledyne Continental
Air Carrier Operating Certificate:	None	Engine Model/Series:	A-65-8
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Observation Facility, Elevation:	MCN	Weather Information Source:	Weather Observation Facility
Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Lowest Ceiling:	None
Condition of Light:	Day	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	4 knots
Temperature:	31 °C / 20 °C	Visibility	10 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Andersonville, GA	Destination:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): John W Lovell

Adopted Date: 02/28/2008

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.