

Clinton Festa: Operations Safety Inspector

Federal Aviation Administration
Greensboro Flight Standards District Office
1301 South Terminal Service Road
Greensboro, North Carolina



Aircraft Accident Inspector Report
Date of report: 04/19/2019
Accident aircraft: Piper PA-22-150,
N1933P, S/N 22-2684
Single Engine Land Airplane
Location: Blanch, NC

On March 24, 2019 the subject aircraft crash landed in a clearing adjacent to the pilot's private turf runway. The logistics and particulars of the accident are included my FAA Inspector's report.

The aircraft took off at approximately 7:05pm local time, flew around the area for 25 minutes, then landed back at the private runway. The pilot picked up his ten-year old son, then attempted another takeoff. At this time it was about 7:30pm, which was near dusk, but still during daylight.

Shortly after takeoff, the aircraft experienced an engine failure. The pilot does not remember many of the details, except that he was able to find a small field to land in, and that he tried to prevent his son from injury on impact. Both seats had lap belts only.

The aircraft landed in the small field and was destroyed. The pilot sustained serious injuries, and the son sustained minor injuries. The pilot's wife witnessed the event, and said that it sounded like fuel was cut to the engine, then she saw the aircraft bank, followed by a sputtering of the engine, though it never regained power.

I went to investigate the accident on March 25, 2019 with ASI Tim McQuain. The propeller was not curled nor did it appear to be producing power on impact. The impact was confined to a small radius, indicating the likelihood of a slow airspeed and steep angle of pitch on impact. The aircraft was destroyed with damage to all landing gear, both wings, and numerous other sections of the fuselage. Most of the energy appeared to be absorbed by the nose gear's impact into the grass. The smell of fuel was still present at the site, however, both wings were damaged to the extent that it was not possible to tell if there was fuel in the wings prior to impact. The right wing was empty of fuel, however, there was fuel in the lines.

Inspector McQuain spent that day inspecting for possible mechanical defects, and found none on that day or on subsequent days in which he returned to inspect. I found no mechanical defects either.

While it is possible that fuel starvation or contamination led to this engine failure, there is insufficient evidence to prove it. There was no evidence of fuel contamination in the samples taken. The evidence that would support fuel starvation or contamination is the eye-witness' description of the engine failure, and the empty right fuel tank, however, that may have been due to the damage caused by the crash.

The pilot was found to have an out-of-date medical, which will be addressed with a separate investigation. This investigation is closed with inconclusive evidence to determine the exact cause of the engine failure.

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