



Lynn Spencer
Air Safety Investigator
Aviation Safety - Eastern Region (AS-ERA)

Date: January 30, 2022
Subject: ERA23LA118 Interview with pilot
Contact: Mark Chemacki

The following is a record of conversation with Mr. Mark Chemacki. Mr. Chemacki was interviewed by phone at 1515 EST on January 30, 2023. He was called at [REDACTED] and he provided an e-mail address of [REDACTED]

I informed Mr. Chemacki that I received his 6120 form and appreciated his detailed accounting of the engine fire. I asked him if he was using the checklist provided by the Raleigh Flying Club during the attempted engine start. He responded that he finds their checklist difficult to use so he uses a commercially purchased checklist by Checkmate, which they are aware of and okay with. He was using the checklist the day of the engine fire. I let him know that I had noted variances between the flying club's checklist and the POH's checklist for a flooded start.

He stated that the checklist he used directed him to prime 3-4 times before attempting to start the engine, and the POH indicated 1-3 times. He stated that he knows he "primed it more" and that he "didn't think it would start without that." He stated that the worst thing he thought could happen was that he would flood the engine, and he did not know that over-priming could cause a fire.

He explained that his Checkmate checklist directed that the mixture should be shut off and throttle should be full for a flooded engine, so that is what he did. The flying club members were recently sent instructions indicating that pilots could attempt an engine start 3 times and if unsuccessful, wait 30 minutes before trying again. He said that he has learned a lot from this experience. He read the POH before he was checked out, and he had a conversation with his instructor Meade Baskerville from the flying club because he noted differences in the checklist, but he did things the way they wanted them done.

He stated that has had numerous problems starting the accident airplane, and there seemed to be deviations between the flying club guidance and the POH. For example, the POH indicated that the minimum oil for flight was 2 qts, his flying club instructor told him that 4 qts was the minimum, and he received an email stating that 6 qts was the minimum.

He added that he feels frustrated that the airplane was hard to start but he accepts full responsibility for the fire because he did not know that over-priming could cause an engine fire on starting. We discussed pumping of the throttle during engine start, which he did during this engine start, and I indicated to him that this can further flood an engine, especially during cold weather when the fuel will not as easily vaporize. I offered to share some information with him, and he responded that he would very much appreciate that as he would like to learn.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on January 30, 2023. He replied on January 31, 2023, at 1410EST with no edits. The final digest was e-mailed to him on February 6, 2023.