



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Whitefish, Montana	Accident Number:	WPR21LA315
Date & Time:	August 10, 2021, 09:40 Local	Registration:	N1257R
Aircraft:	Bellanca 14-19-3	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Fuel starvation	Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported that, at the request of the airplane owner, he was going to reposition the airplane to another airport for an annual inspection. As a precaution, the pilot wanted to fly around the airport traffic pattern to refamiliarize himself with the airplane. The pilot reported that when he arrived at the hangar, the owner stated that the airplane was “ready to go” and that 25 gallons of fuel had been added to the right fuel tank. They departed for a flight around the pattern and were on the crosswind leg when the engine lost power; he adjusted the throttle, mixture, and engaged the boost pump, and the engine started. They continued with the landing sequence, and on the base leg, the engine lost power again. The pilot did not believe the airplane was going to make the runway and elected to land straight ahead in a grassy field. During the landing roll out, the airplane impacted a dirt berm and slid sideways before it came to rest upright. After they exited the airplane, the pilot checked the right fuel tank and noted it was empty.

The airplane was inspected at the accident site by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspector, and it was determined that the right fuel tank was empty, and the left fuel tank was nearly full. The airplane sustained substantial damage to the right wing.

The pilot reported that there were no preaccident mechanical failures or malfunctions with the airplane that would have precluded normal operation.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

A total loss of engine power due to fuel starvation. Contributing to the accident was the pilot's failure to accomplish a preflight inspection.

Findings

Aircraft	Fuel - Fluid management
Personnel issues	Use of equip/system - Pilot
Personnel issues	Preflight inspection - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Approach-VFR pattern final	Loss of engine power (total)
Approach	Fuel starvation (Defining event)
Emergency descent	Off-field or emergency landing
Emergency descent	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	67, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Unknown
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 3 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	June 6, 2020
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	January 12, 2020
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 1420 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1 hours (Total, this make and model), 1369 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 43 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 8 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Pilot-rated passenger Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	78, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane single-engine	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Unknown	Last FAA Medical Exam:	May 1, 1999
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:			

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Bellanca	Registration:	N1257R
Model/Series:	14-19-3	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1966	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	4325
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	IO-470 SER
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	260 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KGPI,2957 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	6 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	09:55 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	167°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	11 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:	150°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.01 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	21°C / 12°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Whitefish, MT	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Whitefish, MT	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	WHITEFISH 58S	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:	3066 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Unknown
Runway Used:		IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Forced landing;Traffic pattern

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	48.40802,-114.29957(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Cornejo, Tealeye
Additional Participating Persons:	Luke Watters; Federal Aviation Administration; Helena, MT
Original Publish Date:	May 25, 2022
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=103692

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).