



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Hancock, Minnesota	Accident Number:	CEN21LA461
Date & Time:	September 29, 2021, 11:15 Local	Registration:	N130GH
Aircraft:	Piper PA-32-260	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Fuel exhaustion	Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported that before he departed for a cross country flight, he asked the fuel servicing personnel to fill the left fuel tank. While enroute and burning fuel only from the left tank, the airplane lost all engine power and the pilot executed a forced landing into a field, which resulted in substantial damage to the right wing and fuselage.

During a post-accident inspection, the left fuel tank was found to be empty. The pilot stated that he assumed all of his fuel tanks were full at the time of departure but did not confirm the fuel level by looking in the tanks or at the fuel gauges. He also stated that his failure to verify the fuel quantity resulted in a fuel exhaustion event when the 6.6 gallons of fuel in the left main tank were consumed. He did not use fuel from the right tank during the flight.

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 as a result of fuel starvation. Contributing to the accident was the pilot's failure to properly manage the fuel on board the airplane and his failure to perform an adequate preflight inspection.

Findings

Aircraft	Fuel - Fluid level
Aircraft	Fuel - Fluid management
Personnel issues	Preflight inspection - Pilot
Personnel issues	Use of checklist - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Prior to flight	Aircraft inspection event
Enroute	Fuel exhaustion (Defining event)
Landing-flare/touchdown	Off-field or emergency landing

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	57,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 3 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	July 21, 2021
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	September 25, 2020
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 586.6 hours (Total, all aircraft), 217 hours (Total, this make and model), 528.2 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N130GH
Model/Series:	PA-32-260	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1965	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	32-124
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	November 2, 2020 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3400 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	100 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4530 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	O-540
Registered Owner:	BRAD INFLUENCE LLP	Rated Power:	260 Horsepower
Operator:	BRAD INFLUENCE LLP	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KMOX, 1130 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	8 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	11:15 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	300°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	8 knots / None	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	160°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.92 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	24°C / 13°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Elbow Lake, MN (Y63)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Benson, MN (KBBB)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	11:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	45.4967,-95.7967(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Williams, David
Additional Participating Persons:	Greg Thurston; FAA; Minneapolis, MN
Original Publish Date:	March 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.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=104002

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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](#).