



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Milan, Georgia	Accident Number:	ERA23LA005
Date & Time:	October 4, 2022, 12:55 Local	Registration:	N7494Y
Aircraft:	Piper PA-30	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Fuel contamination	Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

According to the pilot, he purchased the multiengine airplane about 3 months prior to the accident, then flew it uneventfully to another airport for an annual inspection and to have other maintenance issues addressed. After the annual inspection was completed, several engine-runs and taxi checks were performed with no anomalies noted. On the day of the accident, the pilot completed a preflight inspection and intended to fly to his home airport. The mechanic that completed the annual inspection told him that he had drained black sooty water from the fuel tanks. The pilot went out to the airplane and drained water out of the tanks until the fuel was clean and clear. About 5 to 6 minutes into the flight, the left engine began to run rough and lost partial power. When the pilot increased the power on the right engine, the right engine immediately lost all power. He set up for an off-airport landing and noticed a highway, so he lined up with the centerline of the highway and landed. During the landing rollout, the right-wing tip collided with a highway sign. The airplane subsequently rolled off the highway and came to rest upright in a field. Postaccident examination of the airplane revealed substantial damage to the right-wing spar.

Two days after the accident, more water was sumped from both fuel tanks. After the water was removed, both engines ran normally. The pilot added that there were no preimpact mechanical malfunctions with the airplane. Based on this information, it is most likely that the loss of engine power the pilot experienced during the accident flight was due to fuel contamination.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The pilot's inadequate preflight inspection, which resulted in a total loss of engine power during cruise flight due to fuel contamination.

Findings

Personnel issues

Preflight inspection - Pilot

Aircraft

Fuel - Inadequate inspection

Factual Information

History of Flight

Enroute	Fuel contamination (Defining event)
Emergency descent	Off-field or emergency landing
Landing	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	51, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Lap only
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane single-engine	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	September 21, 2021
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	3005 hours (Total, all aircraft), 16 hours (Total, this make and model), 299 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 16 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N7494Y
Model/Series:	PA-30	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1964	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	30-555
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	June 29, 2022 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3600 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	5043 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	C91 installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	IO-320-B1A
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	160
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:	EZM,306 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	12 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	13:35 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	345°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	3 knots / None	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:	90°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.11 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	21°C / 8°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Fitzgerald, GA (FZG)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	McRae, GA (MQW)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	12:45 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	32.017581,-83.067658(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Boggs, Daniel
Additional Participating Persons:	Steve Davidson; FAA/FSDO; Atlanta, GA
Original Publish Date:	June 6, 2023
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=106060

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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](#).