



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	FALMOUTH, Kentucky	Accident Number:	BF092LA055
Date & Time:	May 7, 1992, 20:28 Local	Registration:	N7851P
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-24-250	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	3 Minor, 1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

n7851P DEPARTED WITH 90 GALLONS OF FUEL ON BOARD. APPROXIMATELY 45 MINUTES AFTER TAKEOFF, THE PILOT NOTED THAT FUEL CONSUMPTION WAS HIGH. ALL FOUR OCCUPANTS COULD SMELL FUEL THROUGHOUT THE CABIN. APPROXIMATELY TWO HOURS AFTER DEPARTURE THE ENGINE QUIT AND WAS RESTARTED. THE PILOT PROCEEDED TO LAND AT AN ALTERNATE AIRPORT. THE PILOT STATED THAT THE FINAL APPROACH WAS HIGH AND EAST. A 20 KNOT TAILWIND EXISTED AT THE TIME OF THE LANDING. THE AIRPLANE OVERSHOT THE RUNWAY, CONTACTED TREES AND CRASHED. THE ON-SCENE INVESTIGATION REVEALED THAT THERE WAS NO FUEL IN THE LEFT MAIN FUEL TANK, 3 GALLONS IN THE AUXILIARY FUEL TANKS, AND THE RIGHT MAIN FUEL TANK CONTAINED SOME FUEL, BUT THE QUANTITY COULD NOT BE DETERMINED. THE RIGHT FULL TANK LINES WERE FOUND SEPARATED FROM THE FUEL TANK AND THE LEFT FUEL TANK LINES WERE INTACT. THE ENGINE-DRIVEN FUEL PUMP, QUICK DRAIN, FUEL SELECTOR VALVE, FUEL TANK CAPS AND LEFT FUEL TANK EXHIBITED NO ANOMALIES.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT MISJUDGED THE AIRPLANE'S ALTITUDE AND DISTANCE IN REFERENCE TO THE RUNWAY. CONTRIBUTING TO THE ACCIDENT WAS THE FUEL SYSTEM LEAK.

Findings

Occurrence #1: AIRFRAME/COMPONENT/SYSTEM FAILURE/MALFUNCTION

Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings

1. (C) FUEL SYSTEM - LEAK

Occurrence #2: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER

Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings

2. FLUID,FUEL - EXHAUSTION

Occurrence #3: FORCED LANDING

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Occurrence #4: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT

Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Findings

3. OBJECT - TREE(S)

4. (C) ALTITUDE - MISJUDGED - PILOT IN COMMAND

5. (C) DISTANCE - MISJUDGED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	37, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	November 19, 1990
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	352 hours (Total, all aircraft), 206 hours (Total, this make and model), 261 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 70 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 20 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N7851P
Model/Series:	PA-24-250 PA-24-250	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	24-3074
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	November 1, 1991 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2900 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	127 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1242 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed	Engine Model/Series:	O-540-AID5
Registered Owner:	DOUGLAS AVIATION INCORPORATED	Rated Power:	250 Horsepower
Operator:	DOUGLAS J. DESZELL	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	5 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	20 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	360°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	16°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	CHATTANOOGA , TN (CHA)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:	TOLEDO , OH (TOL)	Type of Clearance:	IFR
Departure Time:	18:15 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	GENE SNYDER KY62	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	898 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	21	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	4000 ft / 75 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Forced landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	2 Minor, 1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 Minor, 1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	38.670154,-84.33036(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Napolitan, Margaret
Additional Participating Persons:	B. HURD; LOUISVILLE , KY
Original Publish Date:	June 11, 1993
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=11781

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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](#).