



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	PORTERVILLE, California	Accident Number:	LAX92LA324
Date & Time:	July 30, 1992, 18:00 Local	Registration:	N2519N
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-38-112	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Instructional		

Analysis

ACCORDING TO THE STUDENT'S STATEMENT, THE AIRCRAFT WAS ABOUT 5 MILES OUT FROM THE AIRPORT DESCENDING TOWARD THE TRAFFIC PATTERN WHEN THE ENGINE SUDDENLY BEGAN TO RUN ROUGH AND QUIT INTERMITTENTLY. THE PILOT WAS UNABLE TO AFFECT AN ENGINE RESTART AND THE AIRCRAFT COLLIDED WITH ORANGE TREES ABOUT ONE HALF MILE SHORT OF THE RUNWAY. THE STUDENT PILOT WAS ON A SOLO CROSS COUNTRY ROUND ROBIN FLIGHT FROM VAN NUYS, CALIFORNIA, WITH PLANNED STOPS AT PASO ROBLES AND PORTERVILLE FOR A TOTAL DISTANCE OF ABOUT 400 STATUTE MILES. THE DISTANCE FLOWN FROM VAN NUYS TO PORTERVILLE WITH THE STOP AT PASO ROBLES WAS ABOUT 270 MILES. THE INVESTIGATION REVEALED THAT THE STUDENT DEPARTED PASO ROBLES AT ABOUT 1645 HOURS FOR PORTERVILLE AND DID NOT REFUEL THE AIRCRAFT AT PASO ROBLES. THE AIRCRAFT WAS EXAMINED BY FAA AIRWORTHINESS INSPECTORS WHO FOUND NO FUEL IN THE FUEL LINES OR CARBURETOR BOWL. NO FUEL SPILLAGE OR ODOR WAS DETECTED IN THE SOIL BENEATH THE AIRCRAFT. THE FUEL TANKS WERE RUPTURED IN THE IMPACT SEQUENCE WITH THE ORANGE TREES.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: FUEL EXHAUSTION DUE TO THE STUDENT PILOT'S INADEQUATE PREFLIGHT AND INFLIGHT PLANNING, AND THE FAILURE TO REFUEL THE AIRCRAFT.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER(TOTAL) - NONMECHANICAL
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - NORMAL

Findings

1. (C) FLUID,FUEL - EXHAUSTION
 2. (C) PREFLIGHT PLANNING/PREPARATION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
 3. (C) IN-FLIGHT PLANNING/DECISION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
 4. (C) REFUELING - NOT PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Findings

5. OBJECT - TREE(S)

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Student	Age:	26,Female
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	April 23, 1992
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	52 hours (Total, all aircraft), 45 hours (Total, this make and model), 13 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 45 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 25 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N2519N
Model/Series:	PA-38-112 PA-38-112	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	38-79A0887
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	June 23, 1992 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1670 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	56 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	5597 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-235-L2C
Registered Owner:	CASI, INC.	Rated Power:	110 Horsepower
Operator:	CALIFORNIA AVIATION, INC.	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	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	9 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	320°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	36°C / 9°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	PASO ROBLES , CA (PRB)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	Company VFR
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	16:54 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Forced landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	35.95927,-118.920791(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Rich, Jeff
Additional Participating Persons:	CLIFF GIBBONS; FRESNO , CA
Original Publish Date:	September 14, 1993
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=27710

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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](#).