



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	MORGAN HILL, California	Accident Number:	LAX92LA361
Date & Time:	August 23, 1992, 14:15 Local	Registration:	N707CW
Aircraft:	PIPER J3C-65	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

THE PILOT SAID HE WAS FLYING AROUND THE LOCAL HILLS SIGHTSEEING WITH HIS PASSENGER. NEAR THE ACCIDENT SITE THE PILOT PERFORMED SEVERAL TURNS AROUND A SMALL DIRT AIRSTRIP LOOKING AT IT, THEN DEPARTED TO THE WEST. JUST AS THE AIRCRAFT CLEARED A RIDGE LINE HE PERCEIVED A LOSS OF AIRSPEED. THE PILOT STATED THAT HE MANIPULATED THE THROTTLE AND CARBURETOR HEAT CONTROLS BUT THE ENGINE DID NOT RESPOND. THE PILOT TURNED AROUND AND ATTEMPTED TO RECROSS THE RIDGE LINE BACK TOWARD THE SMALL DIRT AIRSTRIP, HOWEVER, HIS ALTITUDE WAS INSUFFICIENT AND THE AIRCRAFT COLLIDED WITH TREES. THE CLOSEST WEATHER OBSERVATION STATION WAS REPORTING A TEMPERATURE/DEW POINT OF 85 AND 46 DEGREES, WHICH IS IN THE AREA OF A CARB ICE GRAPH ANNOTATED 'LIGHT ICING GLIDE OR CRUISE POWER.' EXAMINATION OF THE AIRCRAFT AT THE SITE REVEALED FUEL IN THE TANKS, LINES AND CARBURETOR. THE ENGINE WAS REMOVED FROM THE AIRCRAFT AND INSTALLED IN A TEST CELL. THE ENGINE STARTED AND WAS EXERCISED THROUGHOUT ITS NORMAL POWER RANGE. MAGNETO CHECKS AND ACCELERATION RATES WERE FOUND TO BE NORMAL.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: A LOSS OF ENGINE POWER DUE TO CARBURETOR ICE AND THE FAILURE OF THE PILOT TO USE CARBURETOR HEAT.

Findings

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

Findings

1. (C) WEATHER CONDITION - CARBURETOR ICING CONDITIONS
2. (C) CARBURETOR HEAT - NOT USED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Findings

3. TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	48, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	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:	February 11, 1992
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	585 hours (Total, all aircraft), 100 hours (Total, this make and model), 485 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 20 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N707CW
Model/Series:	J3C-65 J3C-65	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	17011
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	June 30, 1992 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1220 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	96 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	3294 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	CONTINENTAL
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	A-65
Registered Owner:	CHARLES WELLS	Rated Power:	65 Horsepower
Operator:	WEST VALLEY FLYING CLUB	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:	10 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	290°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	29°C / 8°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	PALO ALTO , CA (PAO)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	(PAO)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	13:30 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 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Rich, Jeff
Additional Participating Persons:	JOE ROMANO; SAN JOSE , CA
Original Publish Date:	September 14, 1993
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=27741

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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](#).