



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	ASHTON, Maryland	Accident Number:	IAD96LA097
Date & Time:	June 16, 1996, 18:45 Local	Registration:	N58379
Aircraft:	Piper J-3	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot stated that he departed from the airplane's home base airport with about 9 gallons of fuel. The flight to Kent Island took about 45 minutes. He estimated that when he departed Kent Island to return to the home base the fuel tanks held about 5 gallons of fuel. About 40 minutes after they departed Kent Island, and about 5 miles from the destination airport, the engine lost power. The pilot stated that he chose a field to land in, but in order to avoid livestock and power lines, he '...aimed the airplane to a spot just past the middle of the field.' The airplane stuck a small wire fence with the right main landing gear. The pilot stated that the cause of the loss of engine power was fuel exhaustion.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's inadequate fuel supply which resulted in a fuel exhaustion and a loss of engine power. A related factor was the pilot's inadequate fuel consumption calculations.

Findings

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

Findings

1. (F) FUEL CONSUMPTION CALCULATIONS - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (C) FLUID,FUEL - EXHAUSTION

3. (C) FUEL SUPPLY - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING

Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Occurrence #3: ON GROUND/WATER COLLISION WITH OBJECT

Phase of Operation: LANDING - ROLL

Findings

4. OBJECT - FENCE

Factual Information

On June 16, 1996, at 1845 eastern daylight time (EDT), a Piper J-3, N58379, sustained substantial damage when it collided with a fence and trees during the forced landing/landing roll in Ashton, Maryland. The private pilot and the one passenger reported minor injuries. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the flight, no flight plan was filed. The flight operated under 14 CFR Part 91, and originated from Kent Island, Maryland, at 1805 EDT. The intended destination was Laytonsville, Maryland.

The pilot stated the flight originated from the airplane's home airport, Davis Airport, in Laytonsville, Maryland, fuel was "...estimated to be nine gallons in a twelve gallon tank." The distance being flown was 47 miles. The pilot stated: "I departed Kent [Island] at 6:05p EDT with an estimated five gallons of fuel."

The pilot reported that "...after 40 minutes of flight and five miles from my intended destination (W50) the engine failed. I then searched for possible reasons for the [loss of engine power] and thought it was probably fuel starvation." The pilot reported finding a small field to land in, but that livestock and power lines were present. He stated that in order to avoid the obstacles, he had to shorten the airplane's landing distance. The pilot stated that the aircraft came to a stop after striking a wire fence. The pilot stated: "I looked in the fuel tank and confirmed that it had run dry." He also stated that the probable cause of this accident was pilot error.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	31, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Rear
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-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	December 11, 1995
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	88 hours (Total, all aircraft), 40 hours (Total, this make and model), 43 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N58379
Model/Series:	J-3 J-3	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	8473
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	October 1, 1995 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1170 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	13 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	5628 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	AC-65-8
Registered Owner:	PAILLE, MINA A.	Rated Power:	65 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:	LAYTONSVILLE FLYING SERVICE	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:	2 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	250°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	27°C / 16°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	KENT ISLAND , MD (3W3)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	LAYTONSVILLE , MD (W50)	Type of Clearance:	VFR
Departure Time:	18:05 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	
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:	39.150299,-76.979492(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Moffett, Jodi

Additional Participating Persons:

Original Publish Date: October 22, 1996

Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=28067>

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