



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	LAURENS, South Carolina	Accident Number:	ATL98LA040
Date & Time:	January 24, 1998, 13:07 Local	Registration:	N2609K
Aircraft:	Piper PA-38-112	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported that during his preflight weather briefing he was told the weather conditions would be marginally visual the entire route. En route, circumnavigation was required because of the weather conditions. He decided that a fuel stop would be necessary, however, the selected airports had IMC. According to the pilot, he elected to 'stretch' the flight to the destination when told weather was improving there. About five miles from the destination the engine quit. The pilot stated he spotted a field and prepared for an emergency landing. On final approach, he saw power lines and attempted to go over them. The aircraft stalled, veered to the right and came to rest in an apple orchard.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's inadequate weather evaluation that resulted in initiating flight in marginal visual conditions, and resulted in fuel exhaustion.

Findings

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

Findings

1. (C) PREFLIGHT PLANNING/PREPARATION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) FLIGHT INTO ADVERSE WEATHER - INITIATED - PILOT IN COMMAND

- 3. (C) WEATHER EVALUATION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
- 4. (C) FUEL SYSTEM - EXHAUSTION

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

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

Findings

- 5. TERRAIN CONDITION - CROP

Factual Information

On January 24, 1998, about 1307 eastern standard time, a Piper PA-38-112, N2609K, collided into an apple orchard four miles north of the Laurens County Airport in Laurens, South Carolina. The airplane was operated by the owner/ pilot under the provisions of Title 14 CFR Part 91 and visual flight rules. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and no flight plan had been filed. The private pilot and sole occupant sustained serious injuries and the airplane sustained substantial damage. The flight originated in Lynchburg, Virginia about 0900 eastern standard time.

According to the pilot, he could not land at his re-fueling stop due to instrument meteorological conditions at the intended airport. He stated he continued on to the Laurens County Airport where five miles from the airport, his engine quit. The pilot believes the airplane ran out of fuel. The pilot stated he spotted a field and prepared for an emergency landing. On final approach, he saw some power lines and attempted to go over them. The aircraft stalled and veered to the right. The airplane came to rest in an apple orchard.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	42, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	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-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	July 23, 1997
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	320 hours (Total, all aircraft), 320 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 34 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 21 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N2609K
Model/Series:	PA-38-112 PA-38-112	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	38-79A0686
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	March 21, 1997 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3600 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	38 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1394 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	O-235-L2C
Registered Owner:	MICHAEL L. HOPKINS	Rated Power:	
Operator:		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:	AND ,782 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	38 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	12:45 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	265°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 2500 ft AGL	Visibility	7 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 4000 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	15 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	250°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	11°C / 3°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	LYNCHBURG , VA (LYH)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	(34A)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	09:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	LAURENS COUNTY 34C	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	698 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	26	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	3900 ft / 100 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Forced landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	34.499366,-82.020835(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Wilson, Butch

Additional Participating Persons: THOMAS DAMOUR;
DANIELLE PINNERI;

Original Publish Date: May 4, 1998

Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=3966>

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