



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Cedar City, Utah	Accident Number:	DEN03LA088
Date & Time:	May 23, 2003, 15:10 Local	Registration:	N8199T
Aircraft:	Cessna 175B	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot was en route to attend his grandson's graduation. The pilot made an en route stop and the airplane was refueled to capacity. Forty-five minutes after departure, the pilot encountered "light to moderate turbulence with strong updrafts." He moved his flight bag, which had been on the right front seat, and placed it on the cabin floor behind his seat. He did not realize that the bag's shoulder strap had slid between the seats and was wrapped around the fuel selector handle. When he moved the bag, he inadvertently moved the selector handle from BOTH to the RIGHT tank position. With his destination in sight, the pilot initiated a slow descent. Approximately 3 to 4 miles north of the airport, the engine lost power. The pilot attempted to move the fuel selector to another tank, but the shoulder pad was securely wedged under the handle. Unable to extend the glide because of low altitude, he notified the airport of his intentions and made a forced landing on a dirt road. As the airplane came over a slight rise in the road that dropped off abruptly, it became airborne again. A left crosswind caused the airplane to drift off the right side of the road and it struck a cedar tree.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's inadvertently switching the fuel selector to the right tank, resulting in fuel starvation, and his failure to maintain direction control during the forced landing. Contributing factors were the crosswind and the tree.

Findings

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

Findings

1. (C) FUEL TANK SELECTOR POSITION - INADVERTENT DEACTIVATION - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) FLUID,FUEL - STARVATION

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

Occurrence #3: ON GROUND/WATER COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: LANDING - ROLL

Findings

3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - CROSSWIND
4. (C) DIRECTIONAL CONTROL - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (F) OBJECT - TREE(S)

Factual Information

On May 23, 2003, approximately 1510 mountain daylight time, a Cessna 175B, N8199T, registered to and operated by the pilot, was destroyed when it struck a tree during a forced landing following loss of engine power approximately 10 miles northwest of Cedar City, Utah, Municipal Airport. The private pilot, the sole occupant on board, received minor injuries. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and a VFR flight plan had been filed for the personal flight being operated under Title 14 CFR Part 91. The flight originated in Winnemucca, Nevada, at 1150 Pacific daylight time

The pilot said the purpose of the flight was to attend his grandson's graduation in Canon City, Colorado. According to his accident report, he obtained a weather briefing from FSS (flight service station) and filed a VFR (visual flight rules) flight plan to Winnemucca. He departed Newburg, Oregon, at 0530 Pacific daylight time, and arrived at Winnemucca at 1130. While the airplane was being refueled, he obtained another weather briefing from FSS. He departed Winnemucca at 1215 with 5 hours of fuel on board. Approximately 45 minutes into the flight, he encountered "light to moderate turbulence with strong updrafts." He moved his flight bag, which had been on the right front seat, and placed it on the cabin floor behind his seat. He did not realize that the bag's shoulder strap had slid between the seats and was wrapped around the fuel selector handle. When he moved the bag, he inadvertently moved the selector handle from BOTH to the RIGHT tank position.

After being aloft for 3-1/2 hours, he had Cedar City in sight and initiated a slow descent. Approximately 3 to 4 miles north of the airport, the engine lost power. He attempted to move the fuel selector to another tank, but the shoulder pad was securely wedged under the handle. Unable to extend the glide because of low altitude, he notified the airport of his intentions and made a forced landing on a dirt road. As the airplane came over a slight rise in the road that dropped off abruptly, and it became airborne again. A left crosswind caused the airplane to drift off the right side of the road and it struck a cedar tree.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	59, 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 Invalid Medical for flight	Last FAA Medical Exam:	August 1, 2000
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	May 22, 2003
Flight Time:	604 hours (Total, all aircraft), 67 hours (Total, this make and model), 570 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 12 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 10 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N8199T
Model/Series:	175B	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	17556899
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	May 22, 2003 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2350 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	6 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1340 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	GO-300-D
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	175 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	CDC	Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	15:21 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	12 knots / 19 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	130°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.1 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	29°C / -1°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Winnemucca, NV (WMC)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Cedar City, UT (CDC)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	12:15 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	37.590988,-113.189872(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Scott, Arnold
Additional Participating Persons:	Douglas R Hanson; FAA Flight Standards District Office; Salt Lake City, UT
Original Publish Date:	December 30, 2003
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=57066

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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](#).