



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Rosamond, California	Accident Number:	WPR12CA166
Date & Time:	April 15, 2012, 13:30 Local	Registration:	N74518
Aircraft:	Mooney M20B	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Fuel starvation	Injuries:	2 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The engine lost power after takeoff and the pilot landed in a nearby field, where both wings collided with fence posts. The pilot reported that the left fuel tank was about 1/4 full and the right fuel tank was empty. He had the left fuel tank selected during start up and taxi. As he did his pre-takeoff engine run-up checks, he switched fuel tanks per his normal procedure but did not return the selector valve to the left tank prior to departure. Both wings sustained substantial damage during the accident sequence.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: A loss of engine power during takeoff due to fuel starvation as a result of the pilot’s selection of an empty fuel tank prior to departure.

Findings

Personnel issues	Fuel planning - Pilot
Aircraft	Fuel selector/shutoff valve - Incorrect use/operation
Aircraft	Fuel - Fluid management
Environmental issues	Fence/fence post - Contributed to outcome

Factual Information

History of Flight

Initial climb	Fuel starvation (Defining event)
Initial climb	Loss of engine power (total)
Landing-landing roll	Off-field or emergency landing
Landing-landing roll	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	50, 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 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	June 22, 2010
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	July 3, 2010
Flight Time:	667 hours (Total, all aircraft), 279 hours (Total, this make and model), 667 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 10 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 0 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Mooney	Registration:	N74518
Model/Series:	M20B	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	1829
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	October 23, 2011 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2450 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	3778 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-360-A1A
Registered Owner:	METZLER KEVIN W	Rated Power:	180 Horsepower
Operator:	METZLER KEVIN W	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KWJF	Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	13:56 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.13 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	21°C / -1°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Rosamond, CA (L100)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Rosamond, CA (L100)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	13:28 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	Rosamond L100	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:	3415 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	26	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:	34.866664,-118.199996(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Plagens, Howard
Additional Participating Persons:	Frank Motter; FAA FSDO; Van Nuys, CA
Original Publish Date:	July 18, 2012
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=83403

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