



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	SANFORD, North Carolina	Accident Number:	ATL92LA002
Date & Time:	October 4, 1991, 14:40 Local	Registration:	N8839P
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-24-260	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

THE PILOT STATED THAT AFTER TAKEOFF THE ENGINE BEGAN TO RUN ROUGHLY. HE HAD NO SUITABLE LANDING AREA IN FRONT OF HIM, AND HE ELECTED TO ATTEMPT TO RETURN TO THE AIRPORT. AFTER COMPLETION OF THE TURN, THE ENGINE STOPPED, AND HE WAS FORCED TO EXECUTE AN EMERGENCY LANDING INTO A WOODED AREA. HE HAD ATTEMPTED THE FLIGHT EARLIER IN THE DAY, AND HAD TO RETURN DUE TO A ROUGH RUNNING ENGINE. MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL PERFORMED MAINTENANCE ON THE ENGINE FUEL SYSTEM AND THE PROBLEM WAS THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN CORRECTED. EXAMINATION AND TEST RUN OF THE ENGINE AND EXAMINATION OF THE AIRCRAFT BY FAA PERSONNEL DID NOT REVEAL ANY MALFUNCTION.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE LOSS OF ENGINE POWER DUE TO UNKNOWN REASONS.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

Findings

1. SINGLE ENGINE AIRCRAFT
2. (C) REASON FOR OCCURRENCE UNDETERMINED

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Findings

3. OBJECT - TREE(S)

Occurrence #4: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Factual Information

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):	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:	October 24, 1989
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	1500 hours (Total, all aircraft), 610 hours (Total, this make and model), 1500 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 20 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 19 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N8839P
Model/Series:	PA-24-260 PA-24-260	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	24-4294
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	August 3, 1991 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2900 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	19 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	3936 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, activated, aided in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	IO-54D-D4AS
Registered Owner:	WHITEHEAD, JEFFERSON D	Rated Power:	260 Horsepower
Operator:	WHITEHEAD, JEFFERSON D	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:	FAY ,430 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	1 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	13:46 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	360°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 25000 ft AGL	Visibility	7 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	130°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	28°C / 17°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:	FERNANDINA , FL (55J)	Type of Clearance:	IFR
Departure Time:	14:15 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 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	35.470058,-79.180252(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Sasser iii, Roff
Additional Participating Persons:	DENNIS A SCARFEO; WINSTON-SALEM , NC
Original Publish Date:	December 4, 1992
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=8530

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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](#).