



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

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|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Location: | RIO RANCHO, NM | Accident Number: | DEN99LA014 |
| Date & Time: | 10/20/1998, 1226 MDT | Registration: | N50PM |
| Aircraft: | Beech B200 | Aircraft Damage: | Destroyed |
| Defining Event: | | Injuries: | 2 None |

Flight Conducted Under: Part 91: General Aviation - Personal

Analysis

During his preflight, the pilot checked the fuel gauges and interpreted them as indicating that the aircraft's fuel tanks were full, and did not check the tanks visually. One hour after departure, the aircraft experienced a failure of the right engine, followed several minutes later by the failure of the left engine. He made an emergency landing in a field northwest of Albuquerque. The pilot stated in his accident report: 'When I viewed the [fuel] gauges, I mistook the '600' lbs. as normal for 'full aux.' When I pressed the toggle switch, and saw movement to the 'left'... I mistook this for the mains.' A postaccident examination of the aircraft revealed that no fuel was present in either the auxiliary or main fuel tanks.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's inadequate preflight of the aircraft, resulting in fuel supply exhaustion.

Findings

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

Findings

1. (C) FUEL SYSTEM,TANK - EXHAUSTION
2. (C) AIRCRAFT PREFLIGHT - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND

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

Findings

3. TERRAIN CONDITION - SOFT

Factual Information

On October 20, 1998, at 1226 mountain daylight time, a Beech B200, N50PM, was destroyed after making an emergency landing following a total loss of engine power while in cruise flight near Rio Rancho, New Mexico. The private pilot and his passenger were not injured. The flight was operating as a personal cross-country flight under Title 14 CFR Part 91, and an IFR flight plan was filed. The flight originated from McCarran International Airport, Las Vegas, Nevada, at 0930, with a filed destination of Atlanta, Georgia. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed.

According to the pilot, on the evening before the accident, he called Signature Flight Service, the Fixed Based Operator (FBO) where the plane was parked, and requested that they top off both the main and auxiliary fuel tanks of N50PM. When he arrived at the airport the following morning, he checked the fuel gauges and they "read 600 lbs. each on the gauges," which he interpreted as the auxiliary tanks. He then "pressed the toggle switch down, and the needles moved to the left," leading him to believe the main tanks were full and that the airplane was "properly fueled." The pilot did not visually check the fuel tanks during the preflight.

Approximately one hour after departure from Las Vegas, while level at 33,000 feet (FL 330), the aircraft experienced a failure of the right engine. The pilot notified Los Angeles Center that he needed to descend to the nearest airport. He attempted to proceed to Albuquerque, New Mexico, which was 50 nautical miles to the east. About five minutes later, the left engine failed. Unable to make it to the airport, he made an emergency landing in a field northwest of Albuquerque. When the aircraft touched down, the landing gear sank into the soft ground. The aircraft sustained damage to the airframe and the landing gear.

The pilot stated in his accident report: "My conditioning and focus on 'fuel' pre-flighting had been on the aux[iliary] tanks... The gauges are the same for the aux. and mains with the toggle switch differentiating them. When I viewed the gauges, I mistook the '600' lbs. as normal for 'full aux.' This started a chain reaction that did not get better. When I pressed the toggle switch, and saw movement to the 'left,' which is normal for the aux. gauge and saw a movement, I mistook this for the mains."

An FAA inspector, who examined the aircraft following the accident, stated that he observed no evidence of fuel in either the auxiliary or the main fuel tanks.

Pilot Information

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|----------------------------------|--|--|----------------------------|
| Certificate: | Private | Age: | 52, Male |
| Airplane Rating(s): | Multi-engine Land | Seat Occupied: | Left |
| Other Aircraft Rating(s): | None | Restraint Used: | Seatbelt, Shoulder harness |
| Instrument Rating(s): | Airplane | Second Pilot Present: | No |
| Instructor Rating(s): | None | Toxicology Performed: | No |
| Medical Certification: | Class 3 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim. | Last Medical Exam: | 12/02/1996 |
| Occupational Pilot: | | Last Flight Review or Equivalent: | |
| Flight Time: | 5720 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1488 hours (Total, this make and model), 5720 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft) | | |

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

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|--------------------------------------|---|---|--------------|
| Aircraft Manufacturer: | Beech | Registration: | N50PM |
| Model/Series: | B200 B200 | Aircraft Category: | Airplane |
| Year of Manufacture: | | Amateur Built: | No |
| Airworthiness Certificate: | Normal | Serial Number: | BB-1570 |
| Landing Gear Type: | Retractable - Tricycle | Seats: | 9 |
| Date/Type of Last Inspection: | 04/08/1998, AAIP | Certified Max Gross Wt.: | 12500 lbs |
| Time Since Last Inspection: | 203 Hours | Engines: | 2 Turbo Prop |
| Airframe Total Time: | 591 Hours | Engine Manufacturer: | P&W |
| ELT: | Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident | Engine Model/Series: | PT6A-42 |
| Registered Owner: | MALLEN INDUSTRIES | Rated Power: | 850 hp |
| Operator: | MALLEN INDUSTRIES | Air Carrier Operating Certificate: | None |

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

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|----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|----------|
| Conditions at Accident Site: | Visual Conditions | Condition of Light: | Day |
| Observation Facility, Elevation: | , 0 ft msl | Observation Time: | 0000 |
| Distance from Accident Site: | 0 Nautical Miles | Direction from Accident Site: | 0° |
| Lowest Cloud Condition: | Unknown / 0 ft agl | Temperature/Dew Point: | 27° C |
| Lowest Ceiling: | None / 0 ft agl | Visibility | 15 Miles |
| Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction: | 6 knots, 320° | Visibility (RVR): | 0 ft |
| Altimeter Setting: | 30 inches Hg | Visibility (RVV): | 0 Miles |
| Precipitation and Obscuration: | | | |
| Departure Point: | LAS VEGAS, NV (LAS) | Type of Flight Plan Filed: | IFR |
| Destination: | ATLANTA, GA (FTY) | Type of Clearance: | IFR |
| Departure Time: | 0930 MDT | Type of Airspace: | Class G |

Wreckage and Impact Information

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|---------------------|--------|----------------------|-----------|
| Crew Injuries: | 1 None | Aircraft Damage: | Destroyed |
| Passenger Injuries: | 1 None | Aircraft Fire: | None |
| Ground Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Explosion: | None |
| Total Injuries: | 2 None | Latitude, Longitude: | |

Administrative Information

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|-----------------------------------|--|---------------|------------|
| Investigator In Charge (IIC): | NORMAN F WIEMEYER | Adopted Date: | 08/13/2001 |
| Additional Participating Persons: | WALTER TIDMORE; ALBUQUERQUE, NM | | |
| Publish Date: | | | |
| Investigation Docket: | NTSB accident and incident dockets serve as permanent archival information for the NTSB's investigations. Dockets released prior to June 1, 2009 are publicly available from the NTSB's Record Management Division at pubinq@ntsb.gov , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/ . | | |

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