



Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	Santa Monica, CA	Accident Number:	WPR23FA073
Date & Time:	December 22, 2022, Local	Registration:	N7032X
Aircraft:	Cessna 150A	Injuries:	1 Fatal, 1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

On December 22, 2022, about 1518 Pacific standard time, a Cessna 150, N7032X, sustained substantial damage when it was involved in an accident in Santa Monica, California. The pilot sustained minor injuries and the passenger was fatally injured. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 personal flight.

The pilot reported that the accident flight was to be a local flight, heading northwest along the Pacific Ocean coastline with his passenger. Based at Santa Monica Airport, in Santa Monica, California (SMO), the pilot reported that after topping off the fuel tanks, the airplane felt sluggish during the taxi to runway 21. The pilot canceled his takeoff request and taxied to his hangar to troubleshoot the sluggish anomaly. Initially he believed that the sluggish movement was attributed to low tire pressure, so he ensured that the correct pressure was obtained and subsequently initiated an engine start. He reported that again, during taxi to the runup area, the sluggish movement persisted. Upon reaching the engine run-up area, he completed what he referred to as a successful engine run-up and taxied to runway 21, taking off to the southwest. During the initial climb, about 575 ft above ground level (AGL), the pilot intercepted the coast near Ocean View Park and turned to the right to follow the coastline northwest.

Four minutes into the flight, while over Sunset Beach, the airplane had ascended to 1,025 ft AGL with a consistent airspeed of about 70 mph. The pilot reported that he ensured that the carburetor heat was off, that the mixture was rich, that the throttle was in the maximum position, and that the ignition switch was in the Both position. Subsequently, he heard what he described as a “bang” and made a left 180° turn. The pilot contacted the SMO tower controller and attempted to return to SMO. However, the airplane’s descent rate increased, and the pilot initiated a forced landing to the shoreline about 1,500 ft south of the Santa Monica Pier. The airplane touched down heading south, in the shallow water of the shoreline and nosed over.

The airplane wreckage was secured and transported to a facility for further examination.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N7032X
Model/Series:	150A	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:			
Operator:	DAVID P. SMITH	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Designator Code:			

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	VMC	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KSMO,175 ft msl	Observation Time:	15:23 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	3 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	17°C /8°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	4 knots / , 250°
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility:	9 miles
Altimeter Setting:	30.04 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Departure Point:	Santa Monica, CA	Destination:	Santa Monica, CA

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal, 1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	34.006042,-118.49441

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Hicks, Michael
Additional Participating Persons:	Richard Lewandowski; FAA; Los Angeles, CA
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	