



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Big Spring, Texas	Accident Number:	GAA18CA152
Date & Time:	March 8, 2018, 20:15 Local	Registration:	N8191B
Aircraft:	Piper PA 32R	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Fuel exhaustion	Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported that, although the airplane's fuel gauge was providing intermittent information, he decided to depart on a night cross-country flight. During the flight, the engine lost power. The pilot declared an emergency and selected a road to land on. During the landing, the airplane struck power line wires, impacted the ground, and came to rest inverted.

The airplane sustained substantial damage to both wings, the engine mounts, the rudder and the horizontal stabilizer.

Examination of the airplane by a Federal Aviation Administration Aviation safety inspector revealed that the fuel selector was set to the right-wing tank, and there was no usable fuel in the right-wing tank. The left-wing tank contained usable fuel.

Per Title 14 *CFR* 91.205, no person may operate a powered civil aircraft with a standard category US airworthiness certificate with an inoperative fuel gauge.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The pilot's failure to manage the airplane's fuel supply, which resulted in fuel starvation. Contributing to the accident was the pilot's decision to attempt the flight with an inoperative fuel gauge.

Findings

Aircraft	Fuel - Fluid management
Personnel issues	Task monitoring/vigilance - Pilot
Environmental issues	Wire - Effect on operation
Personnel issues	Incorrect action selection - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Enroute	Fuel exhaustion (Defining event)
Emergency descent	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	33,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	March 6, 2014
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	June 10, 2016
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 530 hours (Total, all aircraft), 240 hours (Total, this make and model), 530 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 12 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N8191B
Model/Series:	PA 32R 301T	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1980	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	32R-8029084
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	May 11, 2017 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3600 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2812.51 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed	Engine Model/Series:	TIO540S1AD
Registered Owner:		Rated Power:	300 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Night
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KMDD,2803 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	02:15 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	140°
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	11 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/ None
Wind Direction:	160°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/ N/A
Altimeter Setting:	29.97 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	16°C / -4°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	GEORGETOWN, TX (GTU)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	MIDLAND, TX (MDD)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	18:30 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	MIDLAND AIRPARK MDD	Runway Surface Type:	Dirt;Grass/turf
Airport Elevation:	2805 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:		IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Forced landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	32.036666,-102.101669(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Hicks, Michael
Additional Participating Persons:	Steven Miller; FAA; Lubbock, TX
Original Publish Date:	August 27, 2018
Note:	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=96845

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), established in 1967, is an independent federal agency mandated by Congress through the Independent Safety Board Act of 1974 to investigate transportation accidents, determine the probable causes of the accidents, issue safety recommendations, study transportation safety issues, and evaluate the safety effectiveness of government agencies involved in transportation. The NTSB makes public its actions and decisions through accident reports, safety studies, special investigation reports, safety recommendations, and statistical reviews.

The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).