

On June 1, 2014, at 1426 mountain daylight time, a Cirrus SR22 airplane, N583KM, impacted terrain on approach to the Animas Air Park (00C), Durango, Colorado. The airplane was substantially damaged and the student pilot, the sole occupant, was not injured. The airplane was registered to and operated by a private individual under the provisions of 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 as a personal flight. Day visual meteorological conditions existed at the time of the accident and no flight plan was filed. The flight originated from Santa Monica Municipal Airport (SMO), Santa Monica, California at 1116.

According to the pilot, he set the mixture control for the engine to "nearly full rich" prior to initiating his descent into 00C. The student pilot was conducting a solo slight from his home airport on the coast to an airport located in the mountains. Just prior to landing on Runway 01, he encountered a "strong downward gust (dust devil.)". The pilot applied power to go around, but perceived that the engine did not respond normally. The airplane subsequently impacted the ground to the left of the runway and the left and right leading edges of the wing and the vertical stabilizer were damaged after colliding with ground obstacles. The pilot reported that the mixture might have been "too rich" during the go-around attempt.

The weather observation station at Durango-La Plata County Airport (DRO), Durango, Colorado, located about 6 miles southeast of 00C reported the following conditions at 1353: wind 270 degrees at 16 knots, with gusts to 24 knots, visibility 10 miles, clear skies, temperature 27 degrees Celsius (C), dew point minus 14 degrees C, altimeter setting 30.08. Density altitude for 00C at the time of the accident was calculated to be 9,376 feet.

Terrain rises quickly to the west of 00C and a significant drop in elevation occurs just prior to the approach end of Runway 01. Because of this topography, large sink rates often occur near the threshold of Runway 01 when strong westerly winds are present, according to the airport manager.

The student pilot's home airport was SMO and he flew nearly all of his 183 hours of flight training in the southern California area. He was not cleared for a solo flight to 00C, nor had he ever flown into 00C prior to the accident. His flight instructor had written "all solo flights require instructor release" in the endorsements section of his logbook.

Review of recorded engine data revealed that the engine remained running during the event, but the fuel flow may have been too high for the field elevation/density altitude. Examination of the engine following the event revealed that all of the sparkplugs were covered in thick, black soot, consistent with carbon fouling and a mixture that was too rich. Examination of the cylinders via borescope revealed no anomalies with the pistons, cylinder barrels, cylinder heads, valves and valve seats. However, all of the components were covered in dark soot.

The sparkplugs were cleaned and replaced in their respective cylinders and the engine was test run utilizing the airplane's fuel supply system from the left fuel tank's outlet line and a substitute fuel tank. The engine ran normally throughout various power settings, including full power, with no anomalies noted.