

# Memorandum of Conversation

Date: June 30, 2020

Time: 1152 central daylight time

Conversation Including: Lillian J. Neal (Pilot)

Conversation Regarding: CEN20LA245, N958HP

Duration of Call: 44 Minutes



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## Summary & Factual Information from Conversation:

Mrs. Neal called to discuss the Cessna 182R (N958HP) airplane accident that occurred near Winfield, Texas, on June 24, 2020.

Mrs. Neal indicated that the accident occurred during a pipeline patrol flight. A typical observation flight is flown about 700 ft above ground level while the pilot observes the pipeline right-of-way for evidence of encroachment, heavy machinery, fire, and pipeline leaks.

Mrs. Neal stated that she departed Cushing Municipal Airport (CUH), Cushing, Oklahoma, with a full fuel load ( 88 gallons useable ) and intended to make a fuel stop at Mount Pleasant Regional Airport (OSA), Mount Pleasant, Texas, before continuing onto Ennis Municipal Airport (F41), Ennis, Texas, where she planned to stay overnight.

Mrs. Neal stated that the flight was uneventful until the airplane crossed over US Interstate 30 near Winfield, Texas, at which point she turned from the pipeline right-of-way toward her planned fuel stop at OSA. However, shortly after crossing US Interstate 30, the engine began to “sputter” and “run rough.” Mrs. Neal attempted to restore engine power by “switching fuel tanks a couple of times” and selecting a full-rich fuel mixture; however, she was unable to restore engine power and it “surged” between idle and a high rpm a couple of times before it had a total loss of engine power. She did not recall hearing the engine backfire or feeling any excessive vibration before the total loss of engine power.

Mrs. Neal stated that she had made a couple turns over US Interstate 30 while the engine was running rough and that the vehicle traffic precluded a safe landing on the roadway, and that there were also high-voltage power lines and antennas in the vicinity. She subsequently located an open field for a forced landing, but the airplane was unable to stop before it collided with a fence and tree line that bordered the field. Mrs. Neal stated that she was wearing her 3-point safety harness throughout the flight.

When asked which fuel tank was selected when the engine began running rough, Mrs. Neal stated that she was unsure because she typically flew the airplane with the fuel selector positioned on BOTH. She recalled repositioning the fuel selector twice after the engine began running rough but did not remember which fuel selector positions she had attempted.

Investigator Fox told Mrs. Neal that a review of flight tracking data revealed that the airplane had been airborne for at least 4.1 hours when the accident occurred. Mrs. Neal stated that the average fuel consumption rate was 10-11 gallons per hour (gph) for the Cessna 182, and that the company requires pilots to land for fuel after 5 hours of flying.

Investigator Fox noted that after 4.1 hours of flying at 11 gph, the engine would have used about half of the airplane’s usable fuel, and asked Mrs. Neal if she had switched fuel tanks during the flight. Mrs. Neal reiterated that she generally flies with the fuel selector positioned on BOTH and, as such, does not select the right or left fuel tank. Mrs. Neal stated that she does reposition the fuel selector to the left tank before refueling. Mrs. Neal acknowledged that it was possible that she had inadvertently departed on the flight with the fuel selector positioned on an individual fuel tank instead of BOTH.

When asked if she monitored the fuel consumption or fuel quantity gauges during the flight, Mrs. Neal stated that she prefers to calculate her fuel remaining based on how long she has been flying (i.e. time based fuel calculations) and does not rely on the airplane's analog fuel quantity gauges because they are often inaccurate. Mrs. Neal further acknowledged that after 4.1 hours of flight time the airplane should still have had about 44 gallons of fuel remaining.

When asked how her attention was divided between flying the airplane and observing the ground during the pipeline patrol flight, Mrs. Neal stated that most of her attention had been dedicated to observing the ground. Additionally, Mrs. Neal stated that the pipeline company had recently complained that there had been some activity along the right-of-way that should have been spotted and reported during a previous flight, and, as a result, she had deliberately paid more attention the right-of-way than she had on previous flights.

--- End of interview summary ---

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I can attest that the above summary and factual information was taken on the above stated day, and is correct to the best of my knowledge:

Signed: \_ Andrew Todd Fox \_

Dated: \_ June 30, 2020 \_

**Andrew Todd Fox**  
**National Transportation Safety Board**  
**Air Safety Investigator**