



Shaun Williams  
Senior Aviation Accident Investigator  
OAS - Central Region

**Date:** 7/12/2022

**Subject:** CEN22LA313 Loss of Engine Power Accident

**Contact:** Jerry Dayton, Pilot-in-Command

On July 10, 2022, about 1810 mountain daylight time, a Piper PA-24-260 airplane, N478WT, sustained substantial damage when it was involved in an accident near Rapid City, South Dakota. The pilot was uninjured and the airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 91 personal flight. Mr. Dayton was the pilot-in-command of that flight and was contacted on July 12, 2022, by the NTSB Investigator-in-Charge.

Mr. Dayton stated that after takeoff, he retracted the landing gear and began a turn about 700 ft above ground level (AGL). When the airplane was about 6,000 ft mean sea level (msl), the engine "cut out." He said he then turned back toward the airport and declared an emergency with air traffic control.

Following the loss of engine power, he attempted to restart the engine multiple times after switching fuel tanks, to no avail. During the landing, the airplane bounced, the landing gear collapsed, and the airplane slid until it came to rest. He then shut down the airplane and evacuated.

When asked about fuel management, Mr. Dayton stated that he had flown the airplane 2 days before the accident, which was after the last annual inspection, and then added 30 gallons of fuel to the left and right main (inboard) fuel tanks for a total of 60 additional gallons of fuel. He said his habit was to begin a flight with the left main tank selected and following the loss of engine power, he switched to the right main tank. He stated that he did not utilize the outboard fuel tanks.

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