

Lawrence Charles Freeman e-mailed statement:

October 2, 2016

Statement of Gear Collapse

On October 1, 2016 at 5:45PM, we were planning to fly from Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport (KFXE) to Punta Gorda, Florida (KPGD) and back. The purpose of this trip was to build more flight time. The tail number of the aircraft was N497SJ.

I (Lawrence C. Freeman) began the flight with a thorough preflight inspection. The engine had 7 quarts of oil, well within range for a cross country flight, the gear appeared to be in normal operating and working order, all rivets were in place, and we made a decision to go. After that we received a clearance to Punta Gorda, we taxied out to the run up area. We went through the FAA mandated checklist including a complete run up where the engine RPM drops were within range on both the Right Magneto and Left Magneto. At this point we were cleared to Runway 9 at KFXE, and then cleared for takeoff.

Conditions at KFXE were sky clear, winds 080 @ 10KTS.

I (Lawrence C. Freeman) applied full throttle and checked all engine indication instruments and everything was in the Green Arc, including the oil temperature and oil pressure. We rotated at 60 and climbed out at 80. Upon rotation, I noticed the shimmy that happens upon takeoff from the gear normally, was more pronounced this flight. We flew straight ahead until 700 feet and turned to a heading of 310 and were cleared to climb to 3000 feet by Miami Approach.

At 2500 feet AGL and 5 miles NW of KFXE, I noticed the oil temperature indication was giving a reading of 245 degrees or Redline. At this point I called Miami Approach and request to terminate our flight plan and return to Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport. At this point they asked me if I had an inflight emergency and I advised that we were facing an oil temperature issue. At this point, I noticed the engine was running roughly, which it did not on the ground when we performed a magneto check. At this point we were requested to turn to a heading of 180 and contact Fort Lauderdale Executive Tower on frequency 120.90.

Upon contacting Fort Lauderdale Executive Tower, we were cleared to land and advised that the winds were 070 @ 12 gusts to 18. I began a turn to final approach or 090 on the heading and slowed down to flap operating range and added one notch of flap to slow down. We were at that point at 90 knots and slowing down. I did not add a second notch of flap due to the wind gusts. We reduced power to 1500 RPM's and slowed down to 72 Knots.

Upon reaching the numbers we began to pull back and attempt to bleed off more airspeed to get the 65 Knots required for landing. We landed and bounced once and could not go around due to the potential engine issue. In a normal situation, we would have executed missed approach and gone around with the winds as they were. Unfortunately, we did not have the luxury at that point as we had a potential engine issue and a go around would have been ill advised in my professional opinion, so at this point we were fully committed to landing.

Thank you,

Lawrence and Jessica