



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Millicent Hill
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

May 11, 2021

Subject: ERA21LA213
Who: Bhavana Kumbhare – Pilot; Anuja Burli – Student Pilot

Via written statement, Ms. Kumbhare provided the following:

“On Monday morning I was scheduled at 8am for my first shared hour building with Anuja Burli. We took a weather briefing, filled out the weight and balance, got it approved from an instructor at 7:30. I did the preflight and we were good to go. We did the preflight checklist; run-up and we took off from rwy11 we headed south west bound at altitude 4500 feet. So, the first leg from KCOI to KIMM Anuja Burli was the PIC. We took the flight following from Orlando approach later on to Miami center then Fort Myers We landed at KIMM. We parked the aircraft and went to KIMM FBO and had coffee relaxed for some time and by 10.30 we planned to leave.

So, before that we did preflight, checked the fuel tanks started the aircraft did the run-up and then took off and headed northeast bound, took a flight following from Fort Myers On the way back from KIMM to KCOI I was the PIC and Anuja my co-pilot was taking care of the radio communications. We climbed to 5500 feet and levelled off to cruise and after sometime we started to experience the engine roughness to troubleshoot it we put the carb heat on but by then the engine started losing power and there was a sudden drop in the rpm I tried putting the throttle to full power when the rpm rises a little bit but went down quickly I checked gauges there was a drop in the fuel pressure so I put the fuel pump on switched the fuel tanks still there was no improvement we checked the circuit breakers to see if any circuit breaker had popped out but they were all in by this time we were losing power and altitude abruptly so my co-pilot tried to trim the aircraft to best glide speed i.e. 73kts but the yoke felt heavy and we couldn't trim the aircraft and by this time she started communicating with the Miami center telling them that we are facing engine roughness and we were losing altitude and power and have to do a forced landing in the field and by this time I was still trying to troubleshoot what to do to make the engine function back to normal. By this time, we were maybe at approximately 2000 feet and at this time my copilot who has had the experience of landing in the grass field and also has the experience of engine failure, so she took the controls and we turned left we found the appropriate field and we landed.”

Via written statement, Ms. Burli provided the following:

“On Monday, we took off from Merritt Island at 0730 after attending the weather briefing and getting our weight and balance approved from an instructor. For the first leg of the flight, I was the PIC and Ms. Bhavana Kumbhare was the co-pilot. We performed all the checks as per the checklist making sure everything was fine and took off for Immokalee. We took a flight following from Orlando on the way. We landed at Immokalee at around 0915-0930. We relaxed at the airport and were headed back to Merritt Island at approximately 1000 where Ms. Bhavana was the PIC.

We took a flight following from Fort Myers on the way back. Since Bhavana had recently received her private pilot license, I took over the communications with the ATC. Fort Myers shifted us to Miami center, and we checked in with them at 5500 feet. After a couple of minutes of cruising, around six nautical miles away from the Okeechobee airport, we experienced engine roughness. I immediately tried to trim the aircraft to its best glide speed, but the yoke felt a little heavy. I switched the carb heat on as we suspected carb icing. The carb heat did not help so I started looking for appropriate fields to land on the left. I also started communicating with the ATC telling them what was going on and what our intentions were. Whilst my co-pilot took the checklist out and tried troubleshooting the problem. The fuel pressure dropped to the red line. We flicked the fuel pump on but that did nothing. The yoke felt heavy, and we had already lost around 2000 feet. Since I've had an experience of Landing on grass fields in New Zealand, I took controls and selected an appropriate field to land. I took my Co-pilots help to turn the aircraft and to pull the yoke on landing since it felt heavy. At around 1000-500 feet, we lost complete power. Our goal was to land the aircraft with minimum damage and to get out safely. We made sure we switched the aircraft off on landing so that the chances of fire were minimum. We tried to contact Miami center on landing. We called 911 and we got help in the next hour.”