

Ralph E. Hicks
Senior Air Safety Investigator
AS-ERA

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Subject: ERA25LA006, Pilot Responses to NTSB Questions re Fuel Planning

The pilot of N12RD, Dave Silva, provided the following responses (by email) to questions regarding his fuel planning for the trip and a recent history of fuel use (verbatim, [in blue](#)):

You stated that you requested the main tanks be topped off at FXE/Banyan Air Services. Please provide a copy of any fueling records if you have them. Also, did you personally examine the main fuel tanks to verify that they were topped? If so, please explain how you did this.

[Good morning Ralph,](#)

[As previously reported, the main tanks were full when we departed FXE:](#)

[Yes, when I got to the airport, I requested the main tanks to be topped off from Banyan Air Services. I observed the two male employees do it, they put in 8.7 gallons, I have a copy of the receipt and it is attached. After they left, I did the preflight and opened both main tank caps and looked inside, the tanks were full. I also drained the tanks. Once inside the cabin, during my checks, I verified that the fuel gauges showed full as well. The fuel valves were set to the mains.](#)

Please provide as much detail as possible regarding your fuel planning for the flight, including expected fuel burn for each leg of the flight. Did you check the fuel quantity again at CDK?

[For fuel planning purposes, I have been using 14 gal/h for the first hour, then 13 Gal/h \(POH says 12.3\), numbers supported by the POH power settings table \(copy attached\) and the Foreflight planning tool which has all the performance data for the Lycoming O540 engine. I reconstructed two similar flight plans in Foreflight last](#)

November to show the FAA inspector my planning data. Copies of these are attached also, as well as a recap of the fuel burn expectation.

In CDK, I again did the preflight, I opened both tanks' caps and saw that the fuel level was approximately one inch above the tab, (the tab indicates about 17 Gallons in the tank) which confirmed my planning data of at least 36 Gallons onboard. The gauges indicated almost 40 gallons total.

In conclusion, I was present when the airplane was topped off, which gave us an autonomy of approximately 4.5 to 5 hours of flying, depending on how much I leaned the mixture, per the POH and per Foreflight. We had flown a little over 3 hours when the power loss happened, there should have been at least 1.5 hours worth of fuel left onboard as can be verified by the print-outs of Foreflight flight plans to get to CDK and to come back to FXE, as well as copies of the Comanche POH power settings chart and my fuel consumption summary.

Numbers don't lie, we took off with enough fuel to get to CDK and back to FXE with the required reserves. At least 20 gallons of fuel should have been left onboard when the power loss occurred.

I still don't have an explanation for what happened but I know for a fact that on October 3rd, when I departed FXE, I had enough fuel onboard to fly to CDK and back, and again when I departed CDK, I had enough fuel onboard to get to FXE plus 45 min of reserves, per the numbers and per the gauges and visual checks.

When was the last fueling of N12RD prior to October 3? Was it at Banyan/FXE? Please provide a copy of the fuel receipt.

The previous fueling was done on September 7, 2024, at Banyan, FXE. The receipt is attached. The main tanks were topped off. After filling it up, my son flew the airplane for 3 touch & goes at FXE. That was the last flight before I flew it on October 3rd.

Were the main tanks topped during this refueling? Were the aux tanks serviced? Please describe how the fuel was distributed.

The main tanks were topped off on September 7 before the flight. The aux tanks were not serviced. There were 6 gallons in the right tip tank (verified by gauge and visual check) and the left tip tank was empty. Only fuel in the main tanks was used for this flight.

When was the last time the aux tanks were fueled or used?

I can't remember the last time the aux tanks were used or topped, I believe that it would have been around 6 months before my last flight. They worked fine and there was no issue.

Mr. Silva also provided supporting documentation, included in the public docket for this investigation.