

Kathryn Whitaker
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Date: January 8, 2025

Subject: Accident involving N505SW on December 27, 2024

Contact: Stasia Nicholson, pilot/owner of N505SW.

In a phone interview on January 8, the pilot stated:

- She had purchased the accident airplane in October 2024 and had flown it about 30 hours. She stated the airplane had experienced no mechanical issues in the time she had flown it.
- She had flown from Gallup, New Mexico, to Lake Havasu City, Arizona earlier on the day of the accident. During that flight, she diverted to Cottonwood, Arizona for a bathroom stop.
- While at Lake Havasu City, she fueled the airplane, adding 10 gallons to each fuel tank using the self-serve pump. She stated that after the addition of this fuel, the airplane had 70 gallons of fuel on board, or 35 gallons per side.
- The pilot stated she did not visually confirm the level of fuel within the tanks prior to departure. She used the instrument panel fuel gauges to determine fuel quantity.
- During the flight, she cruised at about 9,500 ft msl and thought the fuel consumption averaged about 10 gallons per hour. She switched fuel tanks every 30 minutes, using the timer function on the GPS to time the interval.
- During approach to runway 24 at Gallup, she noted the airplane began to descend faster than expected. She advanced the throttle to arrest the

descent, but the engine did not respond, and she realized it had lost total power. She checked the position of the fuel selector to ensure it was set to a tank and not off. The pilot looked at the fuel gauges and stated they both appeared to show half full on both tanks.

- The pilot realized that the airplane was not able to reach the runway and chose to perform a forced landing in an area of unlit terrain. As the airplane approached the landing zone, it impacted power lines and landed hard.



Date: May 1 through May 11, 2025

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In a second phone conversation on May 1, 2025, and emails exchanged between May 1 and May 11, 2025, the pilot stated:

- Prior to the flight from Gallup to Lake Havasu City, she purchased 56.6 gallons of fuel, resulting in the airplane's fuel tanks each being filled to capacity, which she visually verified. When asked if "visually verified" meant that she opened each the fuel caps to visually examine the fuel level in each tank, she clarified that she had not but had visually verified using the airplane's fuel gauges.
- Upon departing Gallup to Lake Havasu City, the tachometer recording window read 3810.3. Upon departing Lake Havasu City back to Gallup (the accident flight), the tachometer recording window read 3813.3.
- The airplane had 64 gallons of fuel aboard upon departure from Lake Havasu City.
- She did not recall when she last switched fuel tanks during the accident flight but estimated that it was about 15-20 minutes before the accident.

- After the accident, she saw an unknown quantity of fuel drain from the airplane's belly. She provided photographs of the airplane with a puddle under the fuselage.