

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199000578**

Cessna 210N

18 February 1990

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NOTE: All air safety occurrences reported to the ATSB are categorised and recorded. For a detailed explanation on Category definitions please refer to the ATSB website at www.atsb.gov.au.

Occurrence Number: 199000578 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: 2 km north of Alice Springs Airport NT
Date: 18 February 1990 **Time:** 1013
Highest Injury Level: Nil
Injuries:

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None
Crew	0	0	1	1
Ground	0	0	0	-
Passenger	0	0	0	3
Total	0	0	0	4

Aircraft Details: Cessna 210N
Registration: VH-LCG
Serial Number: 210-63652
Operation Type: Private
Damage Level: Substantial
Departure Point: Arapunya NT
Departure Time: N/A
Destination: Alice Springs NT

Approved for Release: 5th June 1990

Circumstances:

The pilot had hired the aircraft to conduct a flight to a destination 240 kilometres from the DEPARTURE airport. The aircraft had been operating that day on a charter flight, and was late returning. This caused the pilot to become anxious as the weather was forecast to deteriorate. He was informed by the operator that fuel had been arranged for the aircraft on its arrival, and it would be replenished to the indicator tabs in the fuel tank filler necks. This would give the aircraft an endurance of 240 minutes, the return flight time being estimated as 110 minutes. The pilot duly submitted a flight plan indicating this endurance. When the aircraft landed the refueller set out to refuel it, but the tanker broke down. When the pilot arrived at the aircraft he assumed that it had been refuelled. He carried out a rushed pre-flight inspection including a check of the fuel tanks, although he did not consciously notice if the level was up to the tabs. The flight to the destination was uneventful, but at no time did the pilot seriously consult the fuel gauges in the aircraft. The next morning the pilot prepared for DEPARTURE, but as the airstrip was located on a claypan and there was a chance of further rain that would render the area unserviceable, he again rushed the pre-flight inspection. He was still able to see a level of fuel in the tanks, but again failed to cross reference this with the fuel gauges. Approaching Alice Springs the engine began to run roughly and lose power. The pilot was unable to restore power and carried out a forced landing in the only suitable area. On landing the aircraft bounced heavily then collided with a tree. The pilot believed that the aircraft had suffered a fuel blockage and was surprised to learn that the aircraft had not been refuelled before his DEPARTURE. He then accepted the fact that he had run out of fuel. This accident was not the subject of an on-scene investigation.

Significant Factors:

The following factors were considered relevant to the development of the accident

1. Pilot anxiety/apprehension at deteriorating weather conditions.
2. Inadequate pre-flight inspection on two occasions.
3. The pilot did not monitor the fuel gauges during flight.
4. Fuel exhaustion, resulting in the pilot being forced to land on unsuitable terrain.