

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199502266**

**Piper Aircraft Corp
Pawnee**

20 July 1995

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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.

The Bureau did not conduct an on scene investigation of this occurrence. The information presented below was obtained from information supplied to the Bureau.

Occurrence Number: 199502266 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: 2km S Romsey, (ALA)
State: VIC **Inv Category:** 4
Date: Thursday 20 July 1995
Time: 1145 hours **Time Zone:** EST
Highest Injury Level: None

Aircraft Manufacturer: Piper Aircraft Corp
Aircraft Model: PA-25-235
Aircraft Registration: VH-HJV **Serial Number:** 25-7656002
Type of Operation: Commercial Aerial Agriculture - Other
Damage to Aircraft: Substantial
Departure Point: Romsey VIC
Departure Time:
Destination: Romsey VIC

Crew Details:

Role	Class of Licence	Hours on Type	Hours Total
Pilot-In-Command	Commercial	500.0	1280

Approved for Release: Tuesday, July 25, 1995

Shortly after takeoff, at a height of about 250 feet above the ground, the engine lost power. The pilot applied carburettor heat which he said resulted in a brief surge of power after which all power was lost. The pilot dumped the load but while he was manoeuvring to avoid a fence the aircraft stalled and hit the ground heavily.

Subsequent investigation revealed that the engine fuel system was contaminated with water. The pilot had refuelled the aircraft from a 200 litre drum prior to takeoff. Although he checked the drum for water contamination prior to refuelling and then completed a fuel drain check of the aircraft fuel tanks, he did not detect water.

Further investigation revealed that the 200 litre drum from which he refuelled had been sitting in a utility in heavy rain for a number of days and the drum bung had a faulty seal. The pilot believed there was no doubt that he had pumped water contaminated fuel into the aircraft fuel tanks which then found its way into the engine.

Factors

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

The pilot did not detect water in the fuel when he checked the drum source prior to refuelling the aircraft tanks.

The pilot did not detect water in the fuel when he did his fuel drain check of the aircraft tanks after the refuelling.

The aircraft engine lost power when it ingested water contaminated fuel.

After the engine failure, the pilot stalled the aircraft at a low height while manoeuvring to avoid a fence.

