

Brief of Accident

Adopted 07/21/2011

ERA11LA037
File No. 28499

10/27/2010

Aguadilla, PR

Aircraft Reg No. N350RL

Time (Local): 17:40 AST

Make/Model: Piper / PA-31-350
Engine Make/Model: Lycoming / TIO-540 SER
Aircraft Damage: Substantial
Number of Engines: 2
Operating Certificate(s): None
Type of Flight Operation: Personal
Reg. Flight Conducted Under: Part 91: General Aviation

	Fatal	Serious	Minor/None
Crew	0	0	1
Pass	0	0	0

Last Depart. Point: Punta Cana
Destination: San Juan, PR
Airport Proximity: Off Airport/Airstrip

Condition of Light: Day
Weather Info Src: Weather Observation Facility
Basic Weather: Visual Conditions
Lowest Ceiling: None
Visibility: 10.00 SM
Wind Dir/Speed: 050 / 016 Kts
Temperature (°C): 30
Precip/Obscuration: No Obscuration; No Precipitation

Pilot-in-Command Age: 34

Certificate(s)/Rating(s)
Flight Instructor; Commercial; Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land

Instrument Ratings
Airplane

Flight Time (Hours)

Total All Aircraft: 1902
Last 90 Days: 66
Total Make/Model: 38
Total Instrument Time: UnK/Nr

*** Note: NTSB investigators may not have traveled in support of this investigation and used data provided by various sources to prepare this aircraft accident report. ***

The pilot stated he experienced a high temperature in the right engine and a partial loss of engine rpm while at 9,000 feet mean sea level in cruise flight. He requested and received clearance from air traffic control to descend and divert to another airport. He leveled the airplane at 2,500 feet and both engines were operating; however, the right engine experienced a loss of rpm which made it difficult to maintain altitude. The pilot reduced power in both engines, turned the fuel boost pump on, opened the cowl flaps and the engine continued to run with a low rpm. The pilot elected to ditch the airplane in the ocean, instead of landing as soon as practical at the nearest suitable airport, as instructed in the Pilot's Operating Handbook (POH). Additionally, he shut down the right engine before performing the troubleshooting items listed in the POH. He attributed his decision to ditch the airplane to poor single-engine performance and windy conditions. The wind at the destination airport was from 060 degrees at 6 knots and runway 8 was in use at the time of the accident. The airplane was not recovered.

Updated at Jul 21 2011 7:19AM

Brief of Accident (Continued)

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OCCURRENCES

Enroute-cruise - Loss of engine power (partial)
Emergency descent - Ditching

FINDINGS

Personnel issues-Action/decision-Action-Unnecessary action-Pilot - C
Not determined-Not determined-(general)-(general)-Unknown/Not determined - C

Findings Legend: (C) = Cause, (F) = Factor

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The pilot's improper decision to ditch the airplane after a reported partial loss of engine power and overheat on one engine for undetermined reasons.