



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Fulton, Kentucky	Accident Number:	ERA26LA314
Date & Time:	August 21, 2026, 13:00 Local	Registration:	N28RH
Aircraft:	Cessna 421	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Wrong fuel	Injuries:	2 Serious, 2 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Business		

Analysis

The pilot of the reciprocating, multi-engine airplane reported that, after takeoff while climbing to altitude, the #1 cylinder on the right engine was running hot. He leveled the airplane at 5,000 mean sea level (msl), but the cylinder continued to run hot, so he elected to feather the propeller and shut down the engine. As he attempted to navigate to an airport, he noticed that the other engine was beginning to deteriorate and he was no longer able to maintain altitude. He attempted to increase power on the remaining engine but about 2 miles from the airport he performed a forced landing to a cornfield. The airplane sustained substantial damage to the right engine mount, fuselage, and empennage as a result.

A first responder on scene sampled fuel from one of the airplane's fuel tanks with a paper towel and reported that the fuel did not have any color to it. She also reported that the fuel smelled like diesel fuel. A postaccident interview with the fueler at the departure airport confirmed that he had topped off the airplane with "pre-mixed Jet-A." The airport manager at the departure airport confirmed that the fueler used Jet-A fuel when filling the airplane. A fuel receipt was provided by the airport manager, and was signed by the pilot, that showed the airplane had been fueled with 145 gallons of Jet-A.

In an interview with the pilot, he reported that he did not specifically tell the fueler that he wanted 100LL in the airplane. He also stated that he did read the fuel receipt after fueling and that they "wanted to get home" so they "got in the airplane and left." The pilot did not inspect or sample fuel from the airplane's tanks after the fuel was added.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The misfuelling of the airplane by the refueler. Contributing to the accident was the pilot's failure to verify that the airplane had been properly fueled prior to departing on the accident flight.

Findings

Personnel issues	Incorrect action selection - Ground crew
Personnel issues	Lack of action - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Prior to flight	Wrong fuel (Defining event)
Enroute	Loss of engine power (partial)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	73,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Lap only
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	February 1, 2026
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	0 hours (Total, all aircraft), 0 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Passenger Information

Certificate:		Age:	Male
Airplane Rating(s):		Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):		Restraint Used:	Lap only
Instrument Rating(s):		Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):		Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:		Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:			

Passenger Information

Certificate:	Age:	Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Restraint Used:	Lap only
Instrument Rating(s):	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:
Flight Time:		

Passenger Information

Certificate:	Age:	Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:
Flight Time:		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N28RH
Model/Series:	421 C	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1980	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	421C0847
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	8
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	May 1, 2026 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	7500 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	7898.9 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental Aerospace Technologies
ELT:	C126 installed, activated, aided in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	GTSIO-520-L
Registered Owner:	NATIONAL AIRPLANE SALES & LEASING CORP	Rated Power:	375 Horsepower
Operator:	NATIONAL AIRPLANE SALES & LEASING CORP	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	UCY,341 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	9 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	13:00 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	193°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	8 knots / None	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:	240°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.06 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	36°C / 24°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	BLYTHEVILLE, AR (BYH)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:	Lima, OH (AOH)	Type of Clearance:	IFR
Departure Time:	12:27 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	FULTON 1M7	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	403 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry;Rough;Vegetation
Runway Used:	09	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	4001 ft / 75 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Forced landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious, 2 Minor	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Serious, 2 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	36.522871,-88.944625(est)

Preventing Similar Accidents

Prevent Misfueling through Standardized Procedures (SA-051)

The Problem

Misfueling can occur for a variety of reasons and typically results in a complete loss of engine power, which may lead to serious injuries and/or death.

- While fuel nozzles and fuel fillers are designed to prevent misfueling, our investigations have found numerous modifications that can allow misfueling to occur. For example, aviation gasoline (avgas) nozzles are small and round and fit into smaller opening fuel filler ports while jet fuel nozzles are larger and flattened like a duck's bill, requiring a larger fuel filler port. However, our investigations have shown that some fixed base operators (FBOs) are modifying their jet fuel nozzles with the smaller avgas nozzles or other smaller type nozzle, such as the round jet spout nozzle, to more easily fuel smaller turbine helicopters. These non-standard jet fuel nozzles can easily fit into the smaller filler ports of aircraft that require avgas and allow for misfueling to occur
- When an aircraft is modified from using a reciprocating engine (avgas) to a turbine engine (jet fuel), some supplemental type certificates (STCs) have not required that the fuel filler port size be changed accordingly. As a result, line personnel have had to make accommodations such as installing an avgas fuel nozzle or round jet nozzle on a jet fuel truck to allow jet fuel into the smaller avgas fuel filler port. These STC modifications can lead to fueling confusion because the same model or similar looking aircraft may now have different fuel requirements.
- Once the wrong fuel is pumped into an aircraft, identifying that misfueling has occurred can be difficult, if not impossible, to detect.

What can you do?

- Ensure that pilots tell you what type of fuel and the quantity required by their aircraft, then verify that the correct fuel and quantity are being provided.
- Read and verify that fuel placards are correct. If there is a discrepancy between what the pilot asks for and what is indicated on the placard, ASK! In addition, you can use a fuel grade verification form signed by the pilot.
- Identify aircraft through the registration number rather than the aircraft make/model. Due to STC modifications of piston engines to turbines, be aware that even though you have fueled an aircraft with Jet A, a similar aircraft may require avgas. Additionally, if your airport services smaller turbine helicopters, the fuel nozzles may have been modified so that the Jet A fuel dispenser is equipped with an avgas nozzle or round jet spout.

- Many pilots who have had misfueled aircraft have signed receipts that show the wrong fuel was used. Use the receipt as an added safety check in verifying with the pilot that you provided the appropriate fuel.

See <https://www.nts.gov/Advocacy/safety-alerts/Documents/SA-051.pdf> for additional resources.

The NTSB presents this information to prevent recurrence of similar accidents. Note that this should not be considered guidance from the regulator, nor does this supersede existing FAA Regulations (FARs).

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Enders, Ryan
Additional Participating Persons:	Stephen Travis; FAA/FSDO; Louisville, KY
Original Publish Date:	October 1, 2026
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=203660

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).