

Nathaniel Minczeski

I performed an extensive preflight on N53178 prior to the flight on 3/5. The aircraft was serviced with approximately 20 gallons of fuel and the oil was fully topped. I observed the fuel selector to be in the "reserve" position, and that all switches, including the magneto switches were in the "OFF" position. The PIC also performed a preflight/walk around inspection of the aircraft, which I witnessed. After the preflight, the pilot and I pushed the aircraft onto the ramp. I assisted the pilot by helping him to strap in by handing him his shoulder straps, and by priming the engine with the fuel primer. The engine start was normal, and the pilot ran the engine at what sounded to be 800-900 RPM for approximately 8-10 minutes in the ramp area. The engine sounded normal during this time as well. Once the pilot taxied clear of the ramp, I drove an automobile to the south side of the airport, with a hand-held radio and parked in front of the airport operations building. From this vantage I could watch the entire traffic pattern. The takeoff appeared and sounded normal, as well as the climb out. I observed the aircraft make a left turn and the pilot declare engine failure while on the departure leg. From my perspective the plane appeared to be about 1,000 feet MSL, between 1.5-2 miles from the end of runway 21 when this occurred. The pilot continued a descending left 180-degree turn to the North East towards KSMO. I observed the entire emergency approach until I lost sight of the aircraft as it descended below the horizon line of the airport, in the vicinity of the Penmar Golf Course. The pilot appeared to be in control of the aircraft during the entire approach, and maintained a wings level attitude until I lost visual contact with him.

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A black rectangular redaction box covers the signature area. Above the box, there are faint, illegible handwritten marks.