

# Piper Aircraft Corporation Piper PA-28-161,G-BSZT, 7 May 2001 at 1414 hrs

AAIB Bulletin No: 8/2001 Ref: EW/G2001/05/02 Category: 1.3

## INCIDENT

**Aircraft Type and Registration:** Piper Aircraft Corporation Piper PA-28-161,  
G-BSZT

**No & Type of Engines:** 1 Lycoming O-320-D3G

**Year of Manufacture:** 1981

**Date & Time (UTC):** 7 May 2001 at 1414 hrs

**Location:** Lancing Beach, West Sussex

**Type of Flight:** Private

**Persons on Board:** Crew - 3 - Passengers - None

**Injuries:** Crew - None - Passengers - N/A

**Nature of Damage:** Damage to nose gear and one wing.

**Commander's Licence:** Private Pilots Licence

**Commander's Age:** 49 years

**Commander's Flying Experience:** 157 hours (of which 27 were on type)  
Last 90 days - 1 hours  
Last 28 days - Nil

**Information Source:** Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

Before the pilot started the aircraft engine he had carried out a fuel contents check, both visually through the wing tank filler points and on the cockpit gauges. He intended to carry out a short local area flight and considered that there was sufficient fuel in the tanks for it to be completed safely. At 1320 hrs the aircraft was started and taxied using fuel supplied from the left wing fuel tank. This tank had a lesser quantity than the right hand tank and, at the holding point prior to carrying out the engine power checks, the fuel supply was changed to the right wing tank. Following a delay of some 5 to 8 minutes at the holding point due to other traffic the pilot took off into the local area. During the flight, the pilot applied carburettor heat every 5 to 7 minutes and on returning to Shoreham, he was cleared to carry out an overhead rejoin of the left-hand circuit for Runway 03. He descended on the dead side and turned crosswind at 1,100 feet. He carried out the pre-landing checks, which included fuel quantity and supply. He could not recall the quantity but the supply

remained from the right wing tank. The aircraft was turned onto base leg and on levelling wings on a heading of 120° the engine coughed and then stopped. The pilot checked that the mixture was fully rich and opened the throttle. The engine responded and ran for a few seconds before stopping again. The pilot transmitted a 'MAYDAY' distress call and positioned the aircraft for a forced landing on the beach. The aircraft lost height quickly and as it landed on the water's edge the stall warning sounded. The aircraft ran for approximately 20 metres before striking a small undulation of pebbles, which bounced the aircraft back into the air before landing farther up the beach. None of the occupants was injured and all vacated the aircraft through the normal exit.

The pilot's assessment of the cause of the accident was that, although the total fuel on board the aircraft was sufficient for the flight, by omitting to select the fuel supply from the left wing tank, in which adequate fuel remained, the engine had stopped due to fuel starvation. He was distracted when carrying out the fuel item of the pre-landing checklist.