



Airfreddy's Flying Stories

Stories That **All Pilots** Can Learn From

Story # 14: Engine Failure On Flight Test

ENGINE FAILURE ON FLIGHT TEST: This is another engine failure story. This day it happened on a flight test. This is the second engine failure I have seen within my circle of aviation (in 20 years) this time it was partial and not total. In all of my flight time I have never had one. I have had valves get stuck, lost cylinder compression, got carburetor ice and had cylinder mounting studs break. I never had an engine quit on me. (In the second sentence you say you had engine failure. I am confused on what engine failures you experienced.

One of my students was out on a flight test that lasted about 10 minutes. The student and the examiner taxied out and ten minutes later they came back, got out of the plane and were a little shook up. At the same time my phone rang and it was my buddy in the control tower. "Fred just to let you know your plane had a hard landing" They came inside and the examiner discontinued the flight test.

The examiner said that his biggest fear had just come true: Engine failure on a short field takeoff. The student and the examiner got lined up on the runway and the student brought in the power and accelerated down the runway. About a second after the student pulled the nose up they lost most of their power. The examiner nosed the plane over and the plane bounced on the runway. They only got about 20 feet above the ground but at slow airspeed they didn't have much controllability.

The engine ran fine after that? Go figure!! We checked the plane and pulled the sparkplugs and found some lead on the bottom plugs, but not more than was normal. The only conclusion we could come up with was that the lead in two of the sparkplugs heated up and when they pitched the nose up for that second, it

grounded out two of the bottom plugs at the same time. In that case you would loose about 30% of your power. That is really the only thing that made sense to the mechanic, the examiner and myself.

As far as the plane was concerned it was fine and had no damage. The Cessna training aircraft are built for abuse; you really have to slam them in to hurt the landing gear.

Anyhow, the moral of this is once again be prepared. This was one of those freak things and I would say that the probability of me seeing it again is Zero, but you never know.

If you ever start loosing power, get that nose over and fast and get the nose of the aircraft to descent attitude. If you are close to the ground get it at least level.



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