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National Transportation Safety Board PRELIMINARY REPORT AVIATION	NTSB ID: LAX08FA028	Most Critical Injury: Fatal
	Occurrence Date: 11/09/2007	Investigated By: NTSB
	Occurrence Type: Accident	ICAO Report Submitted:

Location/Time					
Nearest City/Place	State	Zip Code	Local Time	Time Zone	
McFarland	CA	93250	1200	PST	

Aircraft information		
Registration Number	Aircraft Manufacturer	Model/Series Number
N6895Z	Piper	PA-60-602P
Type of Aircraft: Airplane	Homebuilt Aircraft? No	

Injury Summary:	Fatal	3	Serious	Minor	None
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Sightseeing Flight: No	Air Medical Transport Flight: No
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Narrative

Brief narrative statement of facts, conditions and circumstances pertinent to the accident/incident:

On November 9, 2007, about 1200 Pacific standard time, a Piper Aerostar, PA-60-602P, N6895Z, collided with terrain in a citrus grove during an attempted emergency landing near McFarland, California. The owner/pilot was operating the airplane under the provisions of 14 CFR Part 91. The private pilot and two passengers sustained fatal injuries; the airplane was destroyed. The cross-country personal flight departed Roseburg Regional Airport (RBG), Roseburg, Oregon, about 0915, with a planned destination of McClellan-Palomar Airport (CRQ), Carlsbad, California. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and an instrument flight rules (IFR) flight plan had been filed. The approximate global positioning system (GPS) coordinates of the primary wreckage were 35 degrees 37.621 minutes north latitude and 119 degrees 08.147 minutes west longitude.

A review of the communications between the airplane and air traffic controllers disclosed that the pilot requested to divert to Meadows Field Airport (BFL), Bakersfield, California, for a "fuel stop." At 1127, radar data shows the radar track for the airplane starting a descent from 21,000 feet, about 20 nm north of Fresno, California. The radar track continues southbound until radar contact was lost in the area of the accident site.

At 1155, the tower controller at BFL received a radio call from the airplane declaring an emergency due to engine problems. ATC personnel requested to know how many people were on board, and the fuel remaining. The pilot reported to the controller that there were three occupants, and 15 gallons of fuel.

Witnesses near the accident site observed the airplane flying southbound, with the wings rocking side to side, until the airplane rolled to the right before impacting into the citrus grove.

The pilot had the airplane refueled on the morning of the accident. Refueling records indicated that the airplane was fueled with 35.8 gallons of 100 low-lead aviation fuel.

The FAA coordinator contacted Ocean Air Aviation, located at RBG, and interviewed the employee who refueled the airplane. The fueler stated that when he arrived at the airplane hangar, the pilot had already pulled the airplane out of the hangar, and the airplane was parked on a slope. He estimated that the left wing tip was 12 to 14 inches lower than the right wing tip. He said that the pilot was very concerned about getting as much fuel in the airplane as possible, because of his upcoming flight to Carlsbad.

Review of the Approved Flight Manual for the airplane disclosed a warning concerning refueling of the airplane if it is parked on a slope. The cautionary note states, "The full amount of usable fuel is based on the airplane setting on a level ramp, laterally and longitudinally level." "The wing tanks are extremely sensitive to attitude and if not level, they cannot be fueled to the full usable capacity."