

This is a great article on planning ahead. What's in your flight bag?

"Definitely a frightening way to land a plane, a pilot and his wife were forced to turn to their Apple tablets when their single-engine plane suffered a complete electrical system failure. Navigating approximately 80 miles in complete darkness on a flight between Wyoming and Wisconsin, the crafty duo utilized airspeed and altitude indicators on their iPads in order to navigate to the Rapid City Regional Airport in Rapid City, South Dakota.

Of course, the lack of an electrical system meant that the pilot and his wife were unable to extend the landing gear as they approached the airport. They were also unable to alert traffic controllers that the plane was incoming.

According to Rapid City Firefighter and Aircraft Rescue specialist Jerry Luera, the pilot located a runway that was not used as often, detailed by the flight data on their iPads, and brought the plane down on the belly of the aircraft. As described by the officials on scene, sparks were shooting from the bottom of the plane as it skidded to a halt at the airport.

Speaking about landing the aircraft, Rapid City Fire Department Battalion Chief Tim Daly said "He had to be a super good pilot." Both the pilot and his wife walked away from the crash without any injuries. Of course, it's likely that the plane will need significant repairs before becoming ready for flight again. It's also likely that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) or National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) will have to complete an investigation of the incident before the pilot is authorized to fly again.

Assuming the photo taken of the plane at the scene is accurate, the plane's registration number indicates that the model is a fixed wing, Piper PA-24-250 Comanche built in 1959. According to FlightAware, the plane was capable of 135mph powered by a reciprocating, 250 horsepower single engine."

In addition to my iPad with a stand alone antenna, I recently added a Sporty's handheld transceiver. This last addition was not due to a stroke of genius on my part but from a recent radio failure on the planes only comm radio. I've also added a very inexpensive portable battery for my iPhone/iPad.

This equipment is all stashed nicely away in a backpack many of you have seen me carry. It accompanies me on every flight. I believe it is much better to be prepared than to have to hope for a break when a system failure occurs.

David Lodes