



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania	Accident Number:	ERA22LA060
Date & Time:	November 14, 2021, 18:59 Local	Registration:	N6714S
Aircraft:	Cessna 150	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	VFR encounter with IMC	Injuries:	2 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported that he was returning to his home base under night, marginal, visual flight rules conditions. While enroute, he inadvertently entered instrument conditions and a sudden “snow squall.” He was blinded by the snow and tried to maintain wings level. The airplane gradually descended and impacted trees and terrain, which resulted in substantial damage. The pilot reported that there were no pre-accident mechanical malfunctions or failures with the airplane that would have precluded normal operation. He had received some instrument training; however, he was not instrument rated.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The pilot’s decision to commence the flight in marginal visual flight rules conditions at night, and his failure to maintain a safe altitude once instrument conditions were encountered.

Findings

Aircraft	Altitude - Not attained/maintained
Personnel issues	Decision making/judgment - Pilot
Environmental issues	Snow - Contributed to outcome

Factual Information

History of Flight

Enroute	VFR encounter with IMC (Defining event)
Enroute-cruise	Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	58, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 3 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	February 23, 2021
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	196 hours (Total, all aircraft), 195 hours (Total, this make and model), 16 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N6714S
Model/Series:	150 H	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1967	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Utility	Serial Number:	15067514
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	January 8, 2021 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1600 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4554 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	O-200-A
Registered Owner:	POCONO MOUNTAINS FLYING CLUB INC	Rated Power:	100
Operator:	POCONO MOUNTAINS FLYING CLUB INC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Night
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KAVP,962 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	6 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	18:54 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	344°
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 4100 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	29.76 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	5°C / -2°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Wilkes-Barre, PA (AVP)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Mount Pocono, PA (MPO)	Type of Clearance:	VFR flight following
Departure Time:	18:53 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	41.23846,-75.6895(est)

Preventing Similar Accidents

Reduced Visual References Require Vigilance (SA-020)

The Problem

About two-thirds of general aviation accidents that occur in reduced visibility weather conditions are fatal. The accidents can involve pilot spatial disorientation or controlled flight into terrain. Even in visual weather conditions, flights at night over areas with limited ground lighting (which provides few visual ground references) can be challenging.

What can you do?

- Obtain an official preflight weather briefing, and use all appropriate sources of weather information to make timely in-flight decisions. Other weather sources and in-cockpit weather equipment can supplement official information.
- Refuse to allow external pressures, such as the desire to save time or money or the fear of disappointing passengers, to influence you to attempt or continue a flight in conditions in which you are not comfortable.
- Be honest with yourself about your skill limitations. Plan ahead with cancellation or diversion alternatives. Brief passengers about the alternatives before the flight.
- Seek training to ensure that you are proficient and fully understand the features and limitations of the equipment in your aircraft, particularly how to use all features of the avionics, autopilot systems, and weather information resources.
- Don't allow a situation to become dangerous before deciding to act. Be honest with air traffic controllers about your situation, and explain it to them if you need help.
- Remember that, when flying at night, even visual weather conditions can be challenging. Remote areas with limited ground lighting provide limited visual references cues for pilots, which can be disorienting or render rising terrain visually imperceptible. When planning a night VFR flight, use topographic references to familiarize yourself with surrounding terrain. Consider following instrument procedures if you are instrument rated or avoiding areas with limited ground lighting (such as remote or mountainous areas) if you are not.
- Manage distractions: Many accidents result when a pilot is distracted momentarily from the primary task of flying.

See <https://www.nts.gov/Advocacy/safety-alerts/Documents/SA-020.pdf> for additional resources.

The NTSB presents this information to prevent recurrence of similar accidents. Note that this should not be considered guidance from the regulator, nor does this supersede existing FAA Regulations (FARs).

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Hicks, Ralph
Additional Participating Persons:	Joe Sablan; FAA/FSDO; Allentown, PA
Original Publish Date:	June 8, 2022
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=104242

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The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).