



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	SAINT LEO, Minnesota	Accident Number:	CHI91LA240
Date & Time:	July 20, 1991, 16:30 Local	Registration:	N1402N
Aircraft:	PIPER J-3	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

THE PILOT SAID THAT WHILE ATTEMPTING TO TAKEOFF FROM A CUT OAT FARM FIELD, THE ACFT FAILED TO ATTAIN A POSITIVE CLIMB. THE ACFT STRUCK A DIRT EMBANKMENT, LOST FLYING SPEED, AND SETTLED INTO A CORN FIELD.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: PERFORMANCE DATA WAS MISJUDGED RESULTING IN A POSITIVE CLIMB NOT BEING ATTAINED BY THE PILOT. A FACTOR RELATED TO THE ACCIDENT WAS HIGH DENSITY ALTITUDE.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

Findings

1. TERRAIN CONDITION - DIRT BANK/RISING EMBANKMENT
 2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - HIGH DENSITY ALTITUDE
 3. (C) CLIMB - NOT ATTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
 4. (C) PERFORMANCE DATA - MISJUDGED - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

5. TERRAIN CONDITION - CROP

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	25, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	May 14, 1990
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	142 hours (Total, all aircraft), 120 hours (Total, this make and model), 115 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 12 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 7 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N1402N
Model/Series:	J-3 J-3	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	22926
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	February 1, 1991 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1220 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	31 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	3367 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	CONTINENTAL
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	C-90-8
Registered Owner:		Rated Power:	90 Horsepower
Operator:	SCHAEFER, WILLIAM J.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Unknown	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	15 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	240°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	29°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	MARSHALL , MN (MML)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	16:30 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Hruban, John

Additional Participating Persons: LARRY JOHNSON;

Original Publish Date: December 4, 1992

Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=15137>

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

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](#).