



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	COFFEYVILLE, Kansas	Accident Number:	CHI92FA027
Date & Time:	November 14, 1991, 10:20 Local	Registration:	N5935P
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-24-180	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

THE PILOT TOOK OFF WITH FULL FUEL TANKS AND FLEW FOR ABOUT 2 HOURS 15 MINUTES BEFORE THE ACCIDENT OCCURRED. THE AIRPLANE WAS OBSERVED NEAR THE ACCIDENT SITE, FLYING ERRATICALLY BENEATH A 300 TO 400 FOOT CEILING IN STRONG, GUSTY WIND CONDITIONS. WITNESSES REPORTED THE ENGINE SEEMED TO BE CUTTING IN AND OUT. THE AIRPLANE WAS NORTHBOUND WITH A 25 TO 40 KNOT TAILWIND WHEN IT WAS OBSERVED TO PITCH UP ABRUPTLY, ROTATE LEFT, AND NOSE DOWN INTO THE GROUND. POST-ACCIDENT EXAMINATION OF AIRFRAME, POWERPLANT AND SYSTEMS REVEALED NO EVIDENCE OF PRE-IMPACT FAILURE/DIFFICULTY. THE LEFT FUEL TANK WAS NEARLY FULL OF FUEL. THE RIGHT FUEL TANK WAS COMPROMISED AT IMPACT, HOWEVER THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE OF FUEL SPILLAGE AT THE ACCIDENT SITE. THE LANDING GEAR WAS EXTENDED, FUEL BOOST PUMP WAS ON, AND THE FUEL SELECTOR WAS JAMMED IN AN INTERMEDIATE POSITION. FUEL CONSUMPTION CALCULATIONS (USING 75%) INDICATED AS MUCH AS HALF THE AVAILABLE FUEL MAY HAVE BEEN BURNED.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT'S FAILURE TO MAINTAIN SUFFICIENT AIRSPEED (ABOVE STALL SPEED) DURING THE EMERGENCY PROCEDURE. RELATED FACTORS ARE THE PILOT'S POOR PLANNING/DECISION, INATTENTIVENESS, AND THE WEATHER (LOW CEILING, GUSTY TAILWINDS).

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER

Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - LOW CEILING
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - GUSTS
3. (F) PLANNING/DECISION - POOR - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. FLUID,FUEL - STARVATION
5. (F) FUEL TANK SELECTOR POSITION - DISREGARDED - PILOT IN COMMAND
6. (F) INATTENTIVE - PILOT IN COMMAND
7. EMERGENCY PROCEDURE - ATTEMPTED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Findings

8. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - TAILWIND
9. (C) AIRSPEED(VS) - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
10. STALL - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

11. TERRAIN CONDITION - OPEN FIELD

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	65, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	January 12, 1990
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	764 hours (Total, all aircraft), 469 hours (Total, this make and model), 17 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 7 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N5935P
Model/Series:	PA-24-180 PA-24-180	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	24-1025
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	October 1, 1991 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2550 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	15 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	5329 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-360-A1A
Registered Owner:	GAMACHE, JOSEPH C	Rated Power:	180 Horsepower
Operator:	GAMACHE, JOSEPH C	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument (IMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown	Visibility	2 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 400 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	25 knots / 40 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	200°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	13°C / -17°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	N/A - None - Fog		
Departure Point:	CLINTON , AR (4M4)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	DERBY , KS (K50)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	08:00 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:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Reeves, Jodi
Additional Participating Persons:	E BILES; WICHITA , KS V ENGLE; WICHITA , KS
Original Publish Date:	April 23, 1993
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=15271

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](#).