



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	HELENA, Montana	Accident Number:	DEN88FA093
Date & Time:	April 8, 1988, 23:30 Local	Registration:	N8008M
Aircraft:	CESSNA 310I	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation		

Analysis

THE ACFT DEPD GLASGOW, MONTANA, WHERE THE PASSENGER (SECRETARY OF STATE FOR MONTANA) HAD BEEN CAMPAIGNING. INITIALLY, A VFR FLT PLAN HAD BEEN FILED; HOWEVER, DRG ARRIVAL AT HELENA, AN IFR FLT PLAN WAS FILED WHEN THE PLT REALIZED THE WX HAD DETERIORATED. THE FCST HAD INDICATED CHC OF CEILING 2500 BKN WITH LIGHT SNOW. THE PLT WAS CLRD FOR AN ILS RWY 27 APCH AT 2328 MDT. THE PLT ACKNOWLEDGED THE CLNC, BUT A SHORT TIME LATER, RADIO CTC WAS LOST. THE ACFT CRASHED ALONG THE ILS COURSE AFTER IT HAD PASSED THE FINAL APCH FIX/OUTER MARKER. WITNESSES RPRTD THAT A SNOW STORM BEGAN JUST BEFORE THE ACDNT OCCURRED AND THE VISIBILITY WAS NEAR ZERO DUE TO BLOWING SNOW. THE ACFT IMPACTED IN A LEFT WING LOW, NOSE LOW ATTITUDE. WITNESSES SAID THEY HEARD THE ACFT OPERATING AT HIGH RPM AND LOW ALTITUDE BEFORE THE CRASH, OR THAT THE ENG SOUND INCREASED BEFORE IMPACT. ONE WITNESS SAID THE ENG SOUND VARIED FM HIGH TO LOW RPM. NO PREIMPACT PART FAILURE OR MALFUNCTION WAS FND. THE PLT HAD LOGGED 2 HRS IN C-310 AND 3 INSTRUMENT HRS IN PREV 90 DAYS.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT

Phase of Operation: APPROACH - FAF/OUTER MARKER TO THRESHOLD (IFR)

Findings

1. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT
 2. WEATHER FORECAST - INACCURATE - NWS PERSONNEL
 3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - SNOW
 4. WEATHER CONDITION - UNFAVORABLE WIND
 5. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - OBSCURATION
 6. FLIGHT INTO KNOWN ADVERSE WEATHER - CONTINUED
 7. (C) PROPER GLIDEPATH - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
 8. (C) DESCENT - NOT CORRECTED - PILOT IN COMMAND
 9. (C) SPATIAL DISORIENTATION - PILOT IN COMMAND
 10. (F) LACK OF RECENT INSTRUMENT TIME - PILOT IN COMMAND
 11. PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT(OTHER CARDIOVASCULAR) - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	64, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane multi-engine; Airplane single-engine; Instrument airplane	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	October 29, 1987
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	17809 hours (Total, all aircraft), 17415 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 75 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 37 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	CESSNA	Registration:	N8008M
Model/Series:	310I 310I	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	310I0008
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	August 24, 1987 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	5100 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	3650 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	CONTINENTAL
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	IO-470
Registered Owner:	RONALD W. JOHNSON	Rated Power:	260 Horsepower
Operator:	JOHNSON, RONALD W.	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:	Night/dark
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown	Visibility	
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	13 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	360°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	0°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	N/A - Blowing - Snow		
Departure Point:	GLASGOW , MT (GGW)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	IFR
Departure Time:	22:02 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class B;Class E

Airport Information

Airport:	HELENA REGIONAL HLN	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	3873 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Snow
Runway Used:	27	IFR Approach:	Localizer only
Runway Length/Width:	9000 ft / 150 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

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:	46.529602,-112.21096(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Tranter, Verlin
Additional Participating Persons:	JIM MORAN; DALLAS , TX BOB JOURNAGAN; PAUL FLOOD; HELENA , MT
Original Publish Date:	October 6, 1989
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=17359

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](#).