



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	DALLAS, Texas	<b>Accident Number:</b>	FTW94LA068
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	January 19, 1994, 18:29 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N123AH
<b>Aircraft:</b>	PIPER PA-34-200T	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	1 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

FOLLOWING TAKEOFF, THE PILOT NOTICED THE UPPER DOOR LATCH ON THE CABIN ENTRY DOOR WAS NOT SECURE. HE DECIDED TO RETURN TO THE AIRPORT FOR LANDING AND SECURE THE DOOR BEFORE CONTINUING HIS FLIGHT. ACCORDING TO THE TOWER CONTROLLER, THE PILOT BECAME GEOGRAPHICALLY DISORIENTED FLYING BENEATH THE CLOUDS AND SHE ASSISTED HIM IN FINDING THE AIRPORT. SHE THEN OBSERVED THE AIRPLANE LAND SHORT OF THE RUNWAY.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT'S FAILURE TO ATTAIN THE PROPER TOUCHDOWN POINT. A FACTOR WAS THE PILOT'S DISORIENTATION AND DARK NIGHT CONDITIONS.

## Findings

Occurrence #1: UNDERSHOOT  
Phase of Operation: APPROACH - VFR PATTERN - FINAL APPROACH

- Findings
1. COOLING SYSTEM,COWLING - NOT SECURED
  2. (F) AIRCRAFT PREFLIGHT - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
  3. PRECAUTIONARY LANDING - INITIATED - PILOT IN COMMAND
  4. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT

5. (F) BECAME LOST/DISORIENTED - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND
6. (C) PROPER TOUCHDOWN POINT - NOT ATTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

## Factual Information

On January 19, 1994, at 1829 central standard time, a Piper PA-34-200T, N123AH, was substantially damaged during landing at Redbird Municipal Airport, Dallas, Texas. The commercial pilot was not injured. Dark night visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the personal cross country flight to Kimble County Airport, Junction, Texas.

The pilot stated to the investigator-in-charge during a telephonic interview, that after takeoff he noticed the upper door latch on the cabin entry door was not secure. He decided to return to the airport, land, and secure the door before continuing his flight. He further reported that he "touched down short of the runway" resulting in damage to the landing gear, propeller, and right wing.

According to the air traffic controller working in the Redbird tower, "the pilot became geographically disoriented below the clouds and I assisted the pilot in finding the airport." She then observed the airplane land short.

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	80, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Left
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 3 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	July 2, 1992
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	No	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	5097 hours (Total, all aircraft), 2200 hours (Total, this make and model), 4772 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 24 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	PIPER	<b>Registration:</b>	N123AH
<b>Model/Series:</b>	PA-34-200T PA-34-200T	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	34-8070149
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Retractable - Tricycle	<b>Seats:</b>	6
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	September 9, 1993 Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	4570 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	30 Hrs	<b>Engines:</b>	2 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	2147 Hrs	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	CONTINENTAL
<b>ELT:</b>	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	TSIO-360-EB
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	HELBING, ARLINGTON JR.	<b>Rated Power:</b>	200 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>		<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None
<b>Operator Does Business As:</b>		<b>Operator Designator Code:</b>	

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Night/dark
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	RBD ,660 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	
<b>Observation Time:</b>	18:30 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Unknown	<b>Visibility</b>	15 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	Overcast / 3100 ft AGL	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	10 knots /	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	150°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	30 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	8°C / -1°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>		<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	IFR
<b>Destination:</b>	JUNCTION , TX (JCT )	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	IFR
<b>Departure Time:</b>	18:25 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class E

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	DALLAS-REDBIRD RBD	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	Concrete
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>	660 ft msl	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	Dry
<b>Runway Used:</b>	17	<b>IFR Approach:</b>	None
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>	3801 ft / 150 ft	<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	Traffic pattern

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>		<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	32.840885,-96.800796(est)

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Gamble, William
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	THOMAS HOOVER; DALLAS , TX
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	November 18, 1994
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class</a>
<b>Note:</b>	
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=18990">https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=18990</a>

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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](#).