



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	CHESAPEAKE, Ohio	Accident Number:	IAD97LA046
Date & Time:	February 4, 1997, 02:30 Local	Registration:	N62332
Aircraft:	Cessna 172P	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot departed at 0030 for a cross-country flight in night visual meteorological conditions. After a 2 hour flight, the pilot entered a left downwind for runway 26. Not satisfied with his approach, the pilot executed a go-around. He reentered the pattern on downwind for runway 8. Once established, the pilot reported that he turned base leg. After rolling wings level on base, the runway environment disappeared, and the landing light illuminated a row of trees. The pilot added full power, closed the carburetor heat, and established a climb attitude, but the airplane contacted trees and was damaged. Since no major impact occurred, the pilot reestablished his approach and completed the landing with no further occurrence, then taxied to the ramp. The pilot had 5.4 hours total night flight time, and this was his first night time logged as pilot-in-command.

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 proper altitude during the approach at night. Related factors were: darkness, and the pilot's lack of night flying experience.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: APPROACH - VFR PATTERN - BASE TURN

Findings

1. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - NIGHT
2. (C) PROPER ALTITUDE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) LACK OF TOTAL EXPERIENCE IN TYPE OPERATION - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

On February 4, 1997, about 0230 eastern standard time, a Cessna 172P, N62332, was substantially damaged during a collision with trees while on base leg at the Lawrence County Airpark, Chesapeake, Ohio. The certificated private pilot was uninjured. Night visual meteorological conditions existed and a visual flight rules flight plan was filed for the personal flight conducted under 14 CFR Part 91.

The private pilot checked weather utilizing the Direct User Access System (DUATS) at 2330, February 3, 1997. After departing the Wright Brothers Airport, Dayton, Ohio, about 0030, the pilot stated he flew locally to check the actual (weather) conditions. Satisfied with the weather, the pilot reported "the remainder of the flight to Lawrence County Airport (HTW) was uneventful and (weather) conditions improved as forecasted."

Upon his arrival at HTW, the pilot entered the left downwind for runway 26 because "I was familiar with this approach." The pilot recalled, "this approach was not satisfactory as my ground speed and altitude were high." Executing a go-around, the pilot reentered the pattern on a left downwind for runway 08. The pilot reported that he added carburetor heat at midfield, reduced engine power to 1500 rpm and lowered flaps to 10 degrees abeam the Runway End Identifier Lights (REIL). At the 45 degree position to the REIL, the pilot reported that he turned base leg and, "upon leveling off (rolling wings level) on base, the REIL disappeared and the (airplane's) landing light illuminated a row of trees." The pilot stated that he "added full power, closed the carburetor heat, and established a climb attitude." The pilot knew that he contacted the trees, but did not feel a major impact, so, "reestablished my decent and airspeed, lowered flaps to 20 degrees, and turned final." The pilot stated that he "completed the landing with no further occurrence" and taxied to the ramp.

The private pilot stated that he had 5.4 total night flight hours and this was the first flight as pilot in command at night. The pilot had 3.4 hours in make and model airplane.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	44, 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:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	June 22, 1995
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	81 hours (Total, all aircraft), 3 hours (Total, this make and model), 29 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 15 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:	Cessna	Registration:	N62332
Model/Series:	172P 172P	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	172-75251
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	January 18, 1997 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2400 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	19 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4881 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-320-D2J
Registered Owner:	AVIATION SALES, INC	Rated Power:	160 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Night/dark
Observation Facility, Elevation:	HTS ,828 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	5 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	02:51 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	210°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown	Visibility	3 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 3600 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	0°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	6°C / 5°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	N/A - None - Fog		
Departure Point:	DAYTON , OH (MGY)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	(HTW)	Type of Clearance:	VFR
Departure Time:	00:30 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Airport Information

Airport:	LAWRENCE COUNTY HTW	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	750 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Wet
Runway Used:	8	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	3002 ft / 70 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop;Traffic pattern

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	38.409168,-82.570632(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Cain, Jim
Additional Participating Persons:	CHRIS COLLINS; CINCINNATI , OH
Original Publish Date:	October 30, 1998
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=28175

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