



AVIATION



HIGHWAY



MARINE



RAILROAD



PIPELINE

Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	HONSDALE, Pennsylvania	Accident Number:	NYC96LA013
Date & Time:	October 16, 1995, 11:30 Local	Registration:	N39964
Aircraft:	Piper PA-32	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot obtained a weather briefing and filed an IFR flight plan with an Automated Flight Service Station (AFSS). After takeoff, he climbed to his cruising altitude of 8,000 feet, which was above the clouds. En route he encountered strong headwinds, and requested a descent to 6,000 feet. ATC issued the pilot an initial descent to 7,000 feet. During the descent, he encountered severe turbulence and icing. After descending below the clouds, the pilot could not maintain altitude and made a forced landing downwind to a nearby airport. During landing, the airplane was blown off of the runway into the runway lights. The reported winds were 250 degrees at 14 knots gusting to 24 knots. During the weather briefing with the AFSS, the pilot was issued an AIRMET for light to moderate mixed/rime icing, in the clouds and precipitation, from the freezing level to 10,000 feet, and isolated severe icing in the clouds. He was given the freezing level along his route to be between 2,000 and 4,000 feet. The briefer also gave the pilot the forecast for 'strong westerly winds,' which included winds at 9,000 feet, from 280 degrees at 38 knots. The airplane was not equipped with anti-icing, or deicing equipment, except for a heated pitot tube.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's improper evaluation of the weather briefing, and his decision to fly into known forecasted moderate to severe icing conditions. Factors in the accident were the adverse weather conditions encountered during the flight and landing.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - NORMAL

Findings

1. (C) WEATHER EVALUATION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - ICING CONDITIONS
3. (C) FLIGHT INTO KNOWN ADVERSE WEATHER - INTENTIONAL - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING

Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY LANDING

Occurrence #3: ON GROUND/WATER COLLISION WITH OBJECT

Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY LANDING

Findings

4. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - TAILWIND
5. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - GUSTS
6. OBJECT - RUNWAY LIGHT

Factual Information

On October 16, 1995, at 1130 eastern daylight time, a Piper PA-32-260, N39964, was substantially damaged during a forced landing to the Cherry Ridge Airport, Honesdale, Pennsylvania. The private pilot and passenger were not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, for the personal flight that originated at Windsor Locks, Connecticut, at 1030. An IFR flight plan had been filed for the flight conducted under 14 CFR Part 91.

The pilot obtained a weather briefing, and filed an IFR flight plan to Columbus, Ohio, with the Burlington Automated Flight Service Station (AFSS). After takeoff from Windsor Locks, he climbed to his cruising altitude of 8,000 feet, which was above the clouds. Near Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, he encountered 30 to 40 knot head winds, and requested a descent to 6,000 feet. The Air Traffic Control facility advised the pilot of turbulence at 6,000 feet, and issued the pilot an initial descent to 7,000 feet.

In the NTSB Form 6120.1/2, the pilot stated:

In the descent I encountered severe turbulence with severe icing...I had previously put on the pitot heat, but in spite of it...the main gear dropped because of icing...below the clouds at 5,500, I was unable to maintain altitude, problem of trim control, I was able to retract [the landing] gear. ATC gave me the direction to nearest airport...and I made a forced landing downwind and crosswind on [runway] 17. I was blown off to the left of the runway onto the grass where I made contact with runway lights.

A review of the audio tape of the pilot's AFSS weather briefing, revealed that the AFSS briefer issued the pilot AIRMET Zulu. The AIRMET was for light to moderate mixed/rime icing, in the clouds and precipitation, from the freezing level to 10,000 feet, and isolated severe icing in the clouds. The briefer stated that the area covered the pilot's route of flight from western Pennsylvania, to Columbus, Ohio. The briefer stated that the freezing level near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was between 2,000 and 4,000 feet. The briefer also gave the pilot the forecast for "strong westerly winds," which included specific winds at 9,000 feet, from 280 degrees at 38 knots, near Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

The airplane, N39964, was not equipped with anti-icing, or deicing equipment, except for a heated pitot tube.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	71,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	June 2, 1995
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	1271 hours (Total, all aircraft), 785 hours (Total, this make and model), 1129 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 56 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 13 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N39964
Model/Series:	PA-32 PA-32	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	32R-7885245
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	April 1, 1995 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3600 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	IO-540-K1G5D
Registered Owner:	CENTURY FLYERS INC.	Rated Power:	300 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:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	AVP ,963 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	22 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	15:50 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	250°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 6000 ft AGL	Visibility	20 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 8000 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	14 knots / 24 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	250°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	11°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	WINDSOR LOCKS (BDL)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:	COLUMBUS (CMH)	Type of Clearance:	IFR
Departure Time:	10:30 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Airport Information

Airport:	CHERRY RIDGE N30	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	1357 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	17	IFR Approach:	Visual
Runway Length/Width:	2420 ft / 50 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Forced landing

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:	41.570175,-75.250854(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Pearce, Robert

Additional Participating Persons: THOMAS J LAHOVSKI; ALLENTOWN, PA

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Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=39114>

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