



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	COTTAGE GROVE, Oregon	Accident Number:	SEA91FA054
Date & Time:	February 19, 1991, 20:56 Local	Registration:	N4518H
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-15	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

SHORTLY AFTER TAKE OFF FROM AN UNCONTROLLED STRIP DURING DARK NIGHT CONDITIONS, THE PILOT LOST CONTROL OF THE AIRPLANE. THE AIRPLANE COLLIDED WITH THE TERRAIN IN A VERTICAL, NOSE DOWN POSITION. DURING THE POST CRASH INSPECTION, THERE WERE NO NOTED MECHANICAL FAILURES OR MALFUNCTIONS WITH THE AIRPLANE OR ENGINE.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT DID NOT MAINTAIN AN ADEQUATE AIRSPEED. FACTORS TO THE ACCIDENT WERE: A DARK NIGHT CONDITION AND AN UNCONTROLLED STALL/SPIN.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

Findings

1. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT
 2. (C) AIRSPEED - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
 3. (F) STALL/SPIN - UNCONTROLLED - 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:	Private	Age:	44, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Unknown
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):		Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	October 10, 1990
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	645 hours (Total, all aircraft), 467 hours (Total, this make and model), 599 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 24 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 15 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N4518H
Model/Series:	PA-15 PA-15	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:		Serial Number:	15-292
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	September 23, 1990 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1100 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	47 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1506 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-145-B2
Registered Owner:		Rated Power:	65 Horsepower
Operator:	LESLIE W. BEAVER	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:	EUG ,265 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	21 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	20:50 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	316°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 7000 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	8 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	140°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	11°C / 9°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	CRESWELL , OR (77S)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	20:55 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	COTTAGE GROVE STATE 61S	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:	640 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	33	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	3200 ft / 60 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	43.710876,-123.030265(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Eckrote, Debra
Additional Participating Persons:	ROY PETERSON; HILLSBORO , OR CHARLES LITTLE; CHINO , CA LEW MASON; VERO BEACH , FL
Original Publish Date:	December 4, 1992
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=41303

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](#).