



AVIATION



HIGHWAY



MARINE



RAILROAD



PIPELINE

Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	WILLITS, California	Accident Number:	LAX98LA259
Date & Time:	August 3, 1998, 16:00 Local	Registration:	N5705B
Aircraft:	Cessna 182	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot was landing in an open pasture. The left wing struck small trees and the airplane's left main gear encountered an area of soft soil. The aircraft then nosed over onto its back.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's selection of an inadequate landing area and failure to maintain clearance from obstacles during the landing roll.

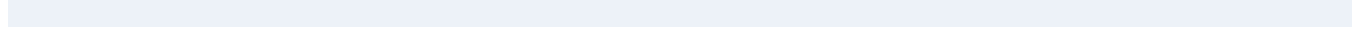
Findings

Occurrence #1: ON GROUND/WATER COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: LANDING - ROLL

Findings

1. TERRAIN CONDITION - OPEN FIELD
2. TERRAIN CONDITION - SOFT
3. OBJECT - TREE(S)
4. (C) UNSUITABLE TERRAIN OR TAKEOFF/LANDING/TAXI AREA - SELECTED - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: NOSE OVER
Phase of Operation: LANDING - ROLL



Factual Information

On August 3, 1998, about 1600 hours Pacific daylight time, a Cessna 182, N5705B, nosed over after colliding with ground obstructions and a ditch while landing in a pasture near Willits, California. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and no flight plan was filed for the operation, which was conducted under the provisions of 14 CFR Part 91 of the Federal Aviation Regulations. The airplane was owned and operated by the pilot, who holds no pilot or medical certificate. The airplane sustained substantial damage and the sole occupant incurred minor injuries. The flight probably originated at the Little River Airport, Ft. Bragg, California, earlier in the day and was terminating at the time of the occurrence.

The pilot refused to make any statement to either the Safety Board investigator or the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). There are no known witnesses to the accident.

Review of FAA airplane registry files disclosed that the airplane was registered to the pilot. A search of FAA Airman and Medical Records revealed no record that the pilot held a FAA pilot or medical certificate.

According to the Mendocino County Sheriff (MCS) and the Willits Police Department, the pilot and this airplane were involved in several incidents between the period August 1 and 3, 1998, which culminated in the accident. Details are available in MCS report 1-98-002642, and Willits Police Department report WG9801314.

The MCS report notes that the pilot flew into the Little River Airport on the afternoon of August 1 and went into the town of Ft. Bragg where he had something to eat and consumed some beverages. At 2030, a MCS patrol officer was dispatched to the Little River Airport in response to a complaint from an airport tenant about a damaged itinerant airplane. The responding officer reported that when he arrived at the airport he found the unoccupied accident airplane parked next to a hangar and the engine was still warm. The reporting citizen was concerned that the airplane may have been stolen and pointed out damaged areas on the airplane. The right windshield frame was damaged, the left rear window was broken, and, the left wingtip and navigation light assembly was damaged. A broken tree branch was found next to the airplane. The MSC officer could not locate the airplane occupant(s) and completed a report.

About 2215, the pilot and some other restaurant patrons were picked up by a cab, and the pilot told the driver he wanted to go to the airport. The driver and the other cab passengers became concerned about the possibility that the pilot may be impaired while driving to the airport. When the pilot got in the airplane and started the engine, the cab driver and other passengers attempted to persuade the pilot not to take off. The pilot then added high power to the engine and the airplane taxied into a ditch, bending and damaging both propeller blades. Subsequently, the MCS office was notified and patrol deputies were dispatched to the airport.

When the officers arrived, the airplane was unoccupied with the door open. A search of the airplane revealed a partially emptied bottle of vodka behind the left seat. After a search of the airport grounds at 2320, the pilot was located behind a hangar lying on the ground in bushes. Following an initial discussion with the pilot, the officers administered a field sobriety test. The pilot failed the Rhomberg, Hand Pat, Finger Dexterity, and Written Alphabet portions of the test. He was then taken into custody for violations of California Vehicle Code sections 23152(a) and 20002(a) and California Public Utilities Code sections 21407 and 21407.1.

The pilot was released from custody on August 2, and was observed by witnesses later that day at the Little River Airport. He removed the cowl from the engine compartment and performed some work in that area, and then straightened the bent propeller tips with a pipe wrench. The pilot then was observed to repaint the blades black with white tips.

According to the MCS report, several witnesses identified and observed the pilot in the restaurant at Ft. Bragg on August 3 consuming alcoholic beverages. The pilot left the restaurant about 1530, went to the airport, and took off.

The airplane was found abandoned and inverted in the pasture on the morning of August 4. The MCS was notified and investigating MCS officers recognized the airplane as the one from the Little River Airport incidents. The officers then contacted the local hospital and inquired if the pilot had been treated the night before or that morning. The hospital confirmed that the pilot was treated that morning for chest and back pain and minor lacerations. According to the attending medical personnel, the pilot told them he had overturned his backhoe. The officers eventually located the pilot. At first, he told them that he had flown into the pasture and landed successfully about 1600 on August 3. During a subsequent takeoff for a flight to Oregon, the engine had quit when he was 300 feet in the air and he hit a hidden stump while landing again after the engine failure. Later during the interview, the pilot stated that he had crashed the airplane while landing it following the flight from the Little River Airport.

The airplane and accident site was examined by an FAA inspector from the Oakland, California, Flight Standards District Office. The inspector noted that multiple sets of tire tracks dimensionally similar to the airplane landing gear were visible in the grass going in different directions. The set of tracks which led to the overturned airplane passed directly between two small trees, one of which had disrupted branches and missing bark. The left main gear track went through an area of softer dirt. The left wing leading edge was damaged. Duct tape was found holding the fractured pieces of the left rear window together. One propeller blade was missing about an 8-inch section of the tip which could not be located in the field.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	None	Age:	59,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	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:	None None	Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:			

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N5705B
Model/Series:	182 182	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	33705
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2600 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-470
Registered Owner:	JAMES R. PETERS	Rated Power:	230 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:	Not reported
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	15 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/ None	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	0°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	FT BRAGG (O48)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	15:30 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	OPEN PASTURE AREA	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	Holes;Rough
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	39.489162,-123.359481(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Rich, Jeff

Additional Participating Persons: JOHN GOOKIN; OAKLAND , CA
LINDA MAGEE; OAKLAND , CA

Original Publish Date: June 22, 2000

Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=43686>

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](#).