



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	FORT COLLINS, Colorado	Accident Number:	DEN99LA069
Date & Time:	May 4, 1999, 10:00 Local	Registration:	N6563H
Aircraft:	Piper J3C-65	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot said that the wind was from 290 degrees at 10 knots with gusts to 20 knots 'or less.' After completing the pre-takeoff checklist, the pilot turned the airplane 360 degrees to check for traffic before taxiing onto the active runway. When the airplane had made a 180 degree turn (tail directly into the wind), an 'unexpected strong gust of wind' lifted the tail and the airplane nosed down. Another wind gust caused the airplane to nose 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 inadequate compensation for wind conditions. A factor was the gusty wind conditions.

Findings

Occurrence #1: ON GROUND/WATER ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER
Phase of Operation: TAXI - TO TAKEOFF

Findings

1. (C) COMPENSATION FOR WIND CONDITIONS - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - GUSTS

Occurrence #2: LOSS OF CONTROL - ON GROUND/WATER
Phase of Operation: TAXI - TO TAKEOFF

Occurrence #3: NOSE OVER
Phase of Operation: TAXI - TO TAKEOFF

Factual Information

On May 4, 1999, approximately 1000 mountain daylight time, a Piper J3C-65, N6563H, owned by Cub Air, LLC, and operated by The Pilot Center, was substantially damaged when it nosed down while turning at Downtown Airpark, Fort Collins, Colorado. The commercial pilot and his passenger were not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the local personal flight that was to be conducted under Title 14 CFR Part 91, and no flight plan had been filed. The flight had not yet originated.

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At 0955, five minutes before the accident, the following weather observation was recorded at Fort Collins-Loveland Municipal Airport (FNL), located 11 miles south of the Fort Collins-Downtown Airpark: Wind, 290 degrees at 14 knots, gusts to 21 knots; sky condition, clear; visibility greater than 10 miles; temperature 11 degrees C. (51.8 degrees F.); dew point -4 degrees C. (24.8 degrees F.); altimeter, 29.37 inches of mercury.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	31, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane single-engine; Instrument airplane	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Expired	Last FAA Medical Exam:	February 17, 1997
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	4088 hours (Total, all aircraft), 130 hours (Total, this make and model), 4006 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 174 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 62 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 7 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N6563H
Model/Series:	J3C-65 J3C-65	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	19755
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	April 10, 1999 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1220 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	14 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1700 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	A75-8
Registered Owner:	CUB AIR, LLC	Rated Power:	75 Horsepower
Operator:	THE PILOT CENTER	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:	FNL ,5016 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	11 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	09:55 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	160°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	14 knots / 21 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	290°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	11°C / -4°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	(3V5)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	00:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	FORT COLLINS DOWNTOWN 3V5	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	4935 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	29	IFR Approach:	
Runway Length/Width:	4699 ft / 48 ft	VFR Approach/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:	40.649116,-105.030609(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Scott, Arnold
Additional Participating Persons:	ROBERT C DIXON; DENVER , CO
Original Publish Date:	April 25, 2001
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=46211

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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](#).